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ABSTRACT

This book by a former principal of Marion High School in Adelaide, South Australia who held that post from 1972 to 1983, examines the influence of theory and practice of secondary education in many countries upon the management of the school during those years. The first 17 chapters discuss the management of the school as a whole, addressing the influences upon the principal's thinking and the difficulties he faced in introducing innovation. Topics include aims and objectives, compelling research findings, success orientation, levelling, the school and its community, factors influencing education in the 1970s, curriculum, methodology and the use of class time, the learning resource center concept, independent learning, and assessment of student progress. The remaining chapters, 18 to 30, take up aspects of special interest, present evidence of success, and consider the future. Topics include gifted and disadvantaged students, discipline, additional human resources, scheduling, communication, buildings and grounds, review and teacher growth, the roles of the principal, tension with the education system, and evaluation. A bibliography is included, along with an index. (TE)

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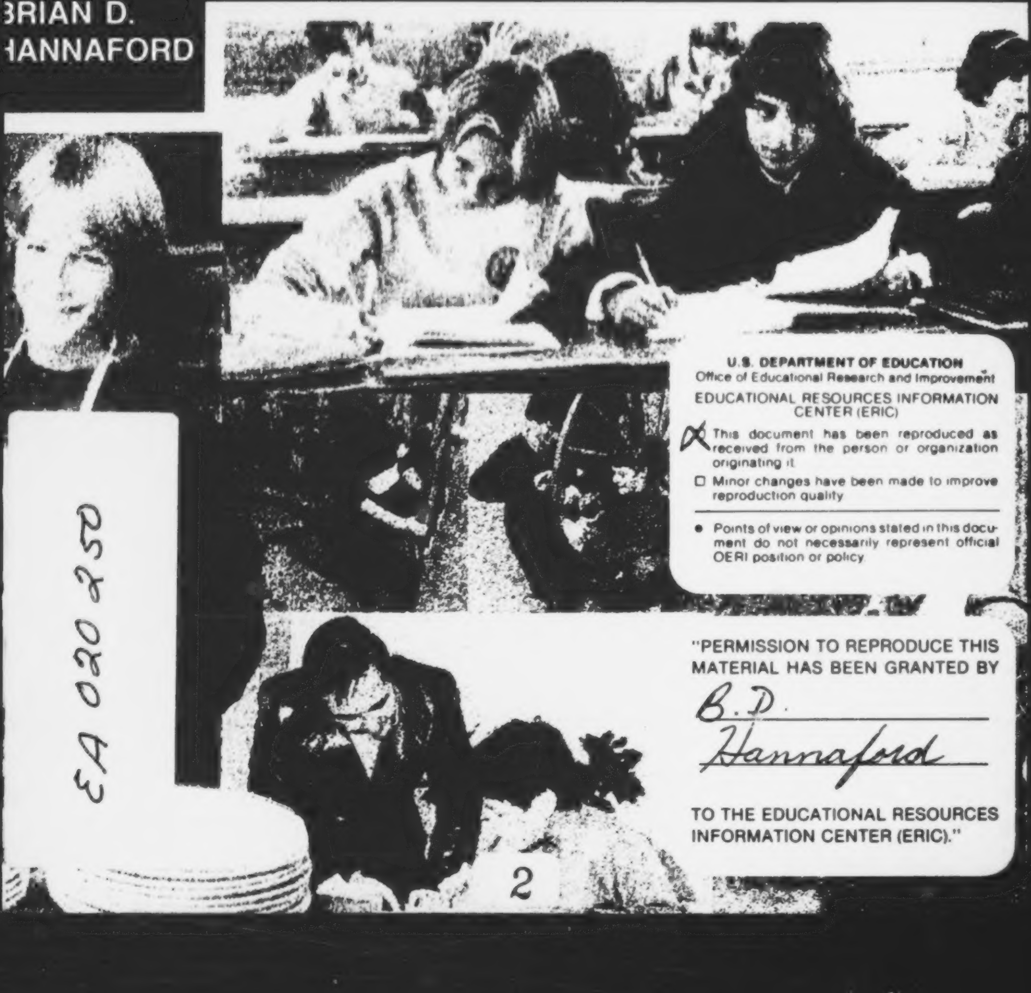
A RISKY BUSINESS

BRIAN D.
HANNAFORD



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A RISKY BUSINESS

Changing a Secondary School

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Flinders University, South Australia.

A
PAGEL
PRODUCTION

The author pictured with some of the students on his last day as Principal of the School.

The pages marked in this way contain work done by a cross-section of students of Marion High School.

Produced in association with Wakefield Press

Brian D. Hannaford

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PREFACE

Risk-taking is a term we generally associate with private enterprise. It conjures up images of tough decision makers pouring over glossy market research reports in smoke-filled boardrooms. If we stop to think about it, education is an enterprise, too. In fact, the collective investment our society makes in learning is boundless, and the stakes are high—the development of a capable new generation able to assume the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Brian Hannaford's book *A Risky Business* underlines the need for school leaders to have the courage to test informed educational convictions, to take the risks which are necessary in a dynamic, contemporary society where schooling is both complex and critical.

Brian Hannaford was himself a highly respected and successful Australian principal who always demonstrated a rare insight into the changing needs of students and teachers. His own experiences indicate that the courage to take risks is the hallmark of the successful and creative principal.

In this study he addresses the forces which moulded his thinking and the difficulties he faced in introducing innovation into schools. He explores such matters as the place of tradition in education, styles of leadership behaviour and the motivation of young people.

But this is not simply one individual's commentary upon his professional life. It is a collection of shrewd observations which will inform all those who have an interest in education and the organisation of schools. Brian weaves into his text the wisdom of researchers, theoreticians and commentators for whom he has a high regard, making it come alive in a practical and instructive way. Most importantly, he has the courage to talk about his failures, not just his successes, and there are many useful lessons here for the aspiring school leader.

We are indeed fortunate that Brian decided, in the relative tranquility of a very active retirement, to pass on the wisdom of a distinguished and long career.

John R. Steinle,
Director-General of Education
1986.

INTRODUCTION

This book is about Marion High School from 1972 to 1983. But it is more than a record of one school. It examines the influence of the theory and practice of secondary education in many countries upon the management of Marion High School. The book reflects the pains and joys of the turbulent period at the school as it made its response to the compelling and persistent evidence of research and experience.

Marion High School opened in 1955 to serve a wide, rapidly developing area of the southern part of Adelaide (population 900,000), the capital city of South Australia. In those days each school served a rigidly defined zone. As the housing densities increased in the Marion area, the catchment area steadily diminished. The school rapidly grew in size and stature as an academic institution catering for that fraction of the secondary school population which sought to take the public examinations at the end of years 10, 11 and 12. The year 10 examination (called the Intermediate) was abolished in 1968 and the last year 11 examination (the Leaving) was held in 1974.

From the beginning, secondary students living in the zone who did not choose Marion High, attended a local or nearby technical high school. The two-school distinction was abolished in 1972 by the Labor Government of the time. That decision (and the de-zoning one, which came later) set going and maintained the chain of events with which this volume concerns itself.

The school which evolved may be described as a community comprehensive secondary school. Its simple policy has been to respond to each student's learning needs in a concerned atmosphere.

It is a truism that sound growth will only be attained slowly. From this viewpoint, the story is about slow, unremitting changes which deepen their roots year by year, wherever they can. But the school often did not have all the time it needed, because much of the change was forced upon it by external factors. This book is the story of how one school tried to cope with these factors and yet keep a vision of the sort of institution it should be.

Over the period there was a considerable change in the social origins of the school's students. In its endeavour to provide for the needs of each child, the practice was to respond to the specific needs of any small group. Hence the school tried to be comprehensive in the literal meaning of the term. The school offered a very wide range of subjects, taught most of them at five levels, and strove to use a range of methods appropriate to the objectives of each level and to the content of the particular subject. Assessment procedures were designed to reflect the objectives of each subject at each level.

The school believed that new knowledge about the ways students learn indicated that students grow in their intellectual capacity by quantum jumps, which occur erratically and unevenly across a range of subjects. Therefore, the school needed a well-practised provision of facilities for students whose performance indicated their readiness to move up. Readiness was considered separately for each subject so that a leap or jump in competence could be affirmed immediately.

It was no accident that the school staff employed a variety of teaching methods. There was an emphasis upon 'activity' tailored to the age, ability and interests of the students. Encouragement to succeed has been supported by a well developed reward system and constructive communication with students and parents.

During the progress of a decade, many knotty problems were tackled. Our experience should have value to others who may be facing similar challenges. A number of issues have been isolated for more detailed examination for those who may have a particular interest in them.

Throughout the period, the school opened itself to the hundreds of visitors who came to see the school each year, we benefited tremendously from the affirmation and stimulation we derived from the perceptive inquiries and constructive comments that were made by a great many of those who came. But, of course, we were also vulnerable to those who were inflexible about their own presuppositions.

The school had very little help that was not available to all of the schools in the system. But it did not seek special deals. To build well, it had to work with standard resources.

That so much was achieved is a credit to the staff who gave their energy, time and wisdom to many challenges.

In telling the story of Marion High, I have tried to capture a little of the drama. It is a personal account of my term as principal (1974 - 1983) with all the dangers of bias, but there is no attempt to conceal the controversy and conflict. There has also been an endeavour to match the theoretical considerations with the reality of making decisions and working towards their fulfilment.

The first seventeen chapters should be viewed as a whole, and the reader should keep in mind that no part is to be regarded as an island from the rest. The remaining chapters take up aspects of special interest, present some evidence of our success and take a brief glance into the future.

The privilege of being awarded a South Australian Education Department Travelling Scholarship gave me the opportunity to visit North America and Europe in 1978. I am especially indebted to Professor Ian Housego and his staff at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, for the chance they gave me to review current research and for making it possible for me to observe, in depth, many of the educational establishments in the Province of British Columbia.

I also wish to acknowledge my debt to my colleagues — Members of my staff, principals, schools and central and regional administrators. Their generosity, toward me personally and their basic concern for students have affirmed my belief in the worthiness of our profession and of the State system of education.

Many people have assisted me with the preparation of this book. I am grateful to Flinders University in South Australia for making its facilities available, and to Professor Colin Power for his encouragement to begin and for his advice along the way. I also wish to thank Erica Jolly, Nicholas Wilson and Colin Brideson for their detailed examination of the text; Julianne Keane, Mark Woollacott and John Wilmshurst for their comments; my daughter, Wendy Steele for helping with the bibliography and my wife, Roslyn, for her support and for typing the manuscript.

Brian Douglas Hannaford
September, 1986.

Men—till a matter be done, wonder that it can be done:
as soon as it is done, wonder again that it was no sooner done.

Francis Bacon *Advancement of Learning*

A child that lives with praise
    Learns to appreciate
A child that lives with happiness
    will find love and beauty
A child that lives with knowledge
    Learns wisdom
A child that lives with encouragement
    Learns confidence.

Ronald Russell, from *'Children Learn as they Live'*

An innovator has to jump the double hurdle of persuading people that existing ways are inadequate, and that the way he proposes is a better one.

Rotary International

1

REALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

This book is about the considerations, decisions, and processes which can bring a school through a period of extreme threat and make it a model for other schools. At Marion High School risks were taken, outmoded practices were challenged and the way was cleared for more effective alternatives.

At Marion we gambled with the notion that if we, as a staff, cared enough about producing learning experiences for each youngster, and showed that we were genuine about each individual, then we could establish a programme which was capable of accommodating the great differences among students.

Successful change to a school involves educators with students who would otherwise have been glad to quit early or would have performed badly while they were at school. The search for solutions leads to many considerations—extra subjects, changes to the culture, new assessment procedures, new teaching techniques, new forms of organisation. None of these considerations can ever be overlooked, but in whatever is done, the challenge to make school above all attractive and meaningful for the students cannot be ignored. Little help was available to us locally, but I was stimulated by what I discovered interstate and overseas. Attempts by state education authorities to help schools have grown steadily over recent years but little enough help has been directed toward the goals that we set ourselves. Those who believe that our project was too ambitious are probably among those observers who lament that the opportunities that gave reason for optimism during the mid-seventies appear to have come to nought. 'For a time, in the early 1970's, it looked as if there would be . . . extra help for the "disadvantaged" as well. It is now clear that that will not happen for the prescribable future'. (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, Dowsett, 1982, p.10)

Yet it *should* be unthinkable that this result could be acceptable. Fortunately, principals possess powers which have some clout. If they are prepared to accept a central role as an agent of change, they can achieve a change round.

Increasingly we became aware at Marion that the basic drive to do the things which were needed to correct the school's deficiencies could only come from *within* the school, where the target groups of students could be identified and where their special needs could be met. The uncertainty, which now surrounds the outcome of school for many individual students, adds importance to their senior secondary years, irrespective of where they are on the ability continuum. Since the central aim is to promote learning, teachers must give attention to *what* they present to their students, and *how* they present it. David Monk sums up the research into this matter when he remarks that, controversy aside, we come down to the unassailable fact that 'students hold the ultimate discretion over whatever resources, that are supplied, are actually utilised to produce educational outcomes'. At least two conditions are required: 'the first is that the learner must consent to take on what is offered; the second, is that there must be a degree of harmony between what is offered, and the rest of the learner's life'. (Monk, 1979 - 80) For example, there must be harmony between the school's culture and the peer culture with which the students identify, and congruence between much of the course content and the things the students believe are relevant to their future.

The students provided us with a list of reasons which ranged high among the elements that, for them, fashioned negative attitudes towards school—habitual failure; rejection of a culture which was designed for young children and all too often inflicted on young people used to behaving as mature young adults outside the school; social or cultural conflicts based on peer culture or socio-economic background; and the frustrations created when the subjects of their choice are not accessible to them. These factors were compelling enough to provide us with an incentive to propose fundamental changes. Evidence also came from the students who longed for stimulating classrooms. Few can fail to recognise the classroom described by seventeen year old Janice Booth, in the poem she so aptly entitled, 'No Change'.

The pain is a hard line behind my eyes
vibrating, as the teacher's voice drones on.
Incomprehensible, he talks to himself
tells himself what he already knows,
a hundred times over.

Scribbling in the holes of my loose-leaf binder,
sighing, shifting.
My eyes wander superficially.
Seeing what they have seen before,
a hundred times over.

Through smudged panes I watch the trees,
like slow dancers they sway.
Black evergreen tops wag at a cardboard sky.
Rain begins to shoot in icy bullets.

Wind arrives, slants the rain, shoots it harder.
Against the glass it drizzles, then gallops downwards.
A single drop separates, runs in frantic haste,
in frantic hurry to lose its identity in a mirror of rain.

Out there, the wind is howling
but the trees sway softly still.
Like a metronome they tick off their rhythm
and ignore the surrounding chaos.

Grey sky runs like a watercolour.
Rain stops. Wind dies.
Blue sky bursts forth and streams of sun
cascade down in shafts of steamy brilliance.
And still the trees sway
always sway.

Suddenly warm and glistening out there,
but in here, it's the same room,
same walls, same faces.
Out there it lived, it changed
while we remained the same,
a hundred times over.

Janice Booth, Cariboo Hill Secondary School,
Burnaby B.C., Canada, printed in *Prints in the Sand*, 1978.

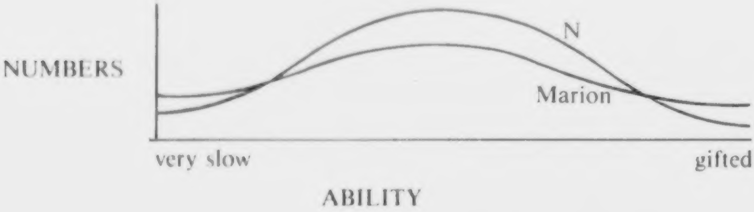
We felt compelled to listen to the message Janice, and many like her, was directing to us. We had to be serious about creating improvements for a large majority of students. We could not avoid the conviction that changes to the classroom held the key to our success—the atmosphere we created, the subjects we offered, the methods we used, the attitudes we encouraged, the goals we set.

The evidence came too from students of different non-English speaking backgrounds who wrestled, without any help, or with insufficient help, with the English language. Often they were put into classes to work with lower achievers than were appropriate for people of their intelligence and keenness, simply because of a language barrier which we chose to ignore.

It also came from students with physical and mental handicaps, who were treated sometimes as if they were almost sub-human. They pleaded to be thought of first as persons, and then as people who wanted a chance to develop their talents and their personalities.

The evidence came from students with special gifts and talents. They felt shut into classes which held them back, and sometimes frustrated them to the point of torture. Often the clever anti-social students responded by finding destructive avenues for their talents, or by failing to perform according to their potential. With these sobering facts before us it is useful to look again at the distribution of abilities among the population of students who enter secondary schools, and to be reminded that this total group provides the potential enrolment of the senior school.

Figure 1.



Traditionally, in our high schools, we have directed our energies to the top fraction, perhaps 30% of the total. Currently about 27% approach matriculation in year 12, and of these about 67%, or 17% of the total, actually matriculate. Little has been done for the brightest 2 - 4 %. The bottom 70%, plus those out of the top group who fail the examination—over 80% of the total—are the losers who are deemed to be academic failures and are labelled second-rate by our society, although some of them do eventually find their way to success. When we have considered alternatives, we have tended to assume that these students are slow learners, an assumption that is only appropriate for the bottom 10 - 20%.

Thus we had to turn our attention to this huge middle group who were not readily able, at the beginning, to conceptualise, to work in the abstract, or to express generalisations. Yet they were well able to acquire knowledge, to learn thought processes, and to apply skills sometimes of a very complex nature. We were to establish that by the time they reached the end of their secondary school life many more than present practice suggests, perhaps twice the total, were able, with the encouragement and confidence born out of success at each step, to handle intellectual challenges equal to those met by many academically successful students. Yet we readily describe them as failures. Glasser (1969) stresses the importance of being a success at school. So often we hear about Glasser in relation to disciplining naughty boys and girls, and miss the central thrust of his work, in which he shows the considerable importance of success to people of all ages.

By success, Glasser meant something quite personal to the student. Students have to feel that they are coping with the work at hand, achieving what is expected of them and able to convert temporary failures into experiences in which they recognise growth in their mental competence. That kind of satisfaction will most likely only accompany achievements which are better than those represented by the minimum marks needed for examination passes. The students will want to feel—to believe—that they are succeeding, on the evidence at the time.

When we faced the problems of the success/failure syndrome, we found that most teachers felt reasonably comfortable about suggestions which required changes to the content of syllabuses. They were not too upset about the introduction of new subjects, or by their subdivision into units which have study periods of less than one or more years' duration. While the traditionalists argued for continuity and depth in the study of a subject, usually behind the safety barrier of matriculation requirements, they were not too distressed by proposals of that kind. In contrast, there was real discomfort about measures that would change the ways by which subjects (or units) were offered, the time that was available each day, how the time was distributed over the week, the forms of assessment and accreditation, and the broader considerations of curriculum, which might include some of the more informal educative elements such as pastoral care, the behavioural code of students, and what constitutes self-disciplined study.

The discomfort could reach stress levels if teachers were challenged to alter the social context of the school in which they worked. Yet changes to the school's culture, that complex of factors which subtly combine to determine the training, behavioural and physical mores in which the educative processes of a school proceed, were an essential precursor to pedagogical change. And the pressure to change would increase during the senior secondary years. But it should be understood that I was not supporting any kind of physical schism between the junior and senior years. I would not know where to place the division. On the other hand I would emphasise that there is a continuity in the maturation of relationships, behaviour and needs of students. The physical, psychological and intellectual elements of maturity were and are not necessarily tied to the age of fifteen (not less), which is still commonly believed to distinguish junior from senior secondary school years.

'Instructional change tends to be limited to what the existing facility can easily accommodate. Thought has to be given, therefore, "to suiting spatial usage to new instructional techniques", because an innovation without appropriate facilities might be doomed before it began'. (Unruh & Turner, 1970, p.176)

Hence this book gives considerable space to how Marion adapted its facilities, the problems that were encountered and what was done to generate the resources that were needed to alter or provide suitable rooms and equipment.

In his Graduation Day Occasional Address to Roseworthy Agricultural College in March, 1983, the Governor of South Australia, Sir Donald Dunstan, made two observations which help set the scene for Marion's development. In part he said,

> Looking back in our history, one marvels at what was done by our forebears with so little in resources, but then we entered an era of prosperity, and we became rather spoilt . . . we became wasteful, whereas once we could manage on the smell of an oily rag. We became cautious, whereas we once were bold. We became such that before we would move, we insisted on everything being neat and tidy, whereas once we would strike while the iron was hot.

If we were to solve our problems in the seventies and the eighties, we would be compelled to make do with only limited resources and without any certainty that what we did would be as successful as we hoped it would be.

In a reference to change Sir Donald commented,

> I am, in general terms, a believer in change. I was to learn late in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising; a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.

We were to find that, although public demands are sometimes noisy, 'opposition to change in the schools is strong. Whether the community is in a stage of deterioration or redevelopment, certain influential groups will cling to customs, traditions and curriculum of the past'. (Unruh & Turner, 1970, p.180)

We would also find that 'informal groups of persons who control power and resources are often more effective in using their collective resources to wield power than are formal organisations'. (Savage, 1968, p.205) Some have more influence than others, yet there is no guarantee that the ones with the power will either be helpful or supportive of useful change.

It was important for us to be sure that we effected real change, and not the illusion of change. If we failed in that distinction, the problems would remain unsolved and no effective progress would have resulted from the energy that was expended. Since there would be constant resistance to change from groups both in the community and within the school the role of the principal was crucial and difficult.

> Changes and innovations in schools are more likely to be accomplished if they are initiated by (the principal) because he has the authority and power to effect them. . . . On the other hand, he should be fully aware of the fact that change is rarely successful unless it is a co-operative effort. (Savage, 1968, p.193)

So the principal cannot sit apart. Once a measure has been accepted as necessary for a particular target group of students, the Head has to be at the centre of the action to ensure that the change is implemented. If the cudgels are not taken up by the principal, the issue will probably degenerate quickly into controversy and conflict. Having forfeited the responsibility, the leadership function will soon be replaced with an adaptive role which is equally difficult, lacking in referent and expert status, and less rewarding.

Teachers, as a corporate body, are unlikely to be any more helpful than the public. Their positions are safe and protected, their jobs assured, and their present situation, as they see it, is as comfortable and as successful as they have a right to expect. But falling enrolment, arrival of non-English speaking migrants, retention of less accomplished students, sharp changes to the general social status of the student body, and dezoning the system, all challenge established practices and constitute a threat. So, whatever strategy the principal or some external agency adopts, progress will be slow and painful. Change will only develop a degree of permanence and be internalised by the teachers when they are ready to accept it as their own. As the Marion story unfolds, it will become clear that the principal had little option but to enter the fray. My own disposition to innovate was perhaps fortunate, but the compulsion to introduce new things came from other sources. I was to discover that 'change occurs as a result of an upsetting experience' (Clark, 1962), and the way through would occur more easily if I could provide a supportive environment in which it was accepted that change was an inevitable part of the immediate future. With that in mind, I tried to create a climate in which staff members, who hoped to modify their work in some way, could ventilate their ideas and feel that their suggestions were contributing to a broad canvas which would be filled in step by step. In the South Australian government school system, many changes have been attempted in the past by decree from 'above'. Perhaps this has arisen out of frustrations of principals or administrators. However, in recent years, we have also witnessed a plethora of innovations entering schools at other levels. The Australian Schools Commission encouraged parents, students and teachers to apply for cash grants. The considerable input of funds certainly stimulated activity but, with that era now largely behind us, we are justified in wondering what has happened to most of these innovations. We have seen a lot of piecemeal projects over the last few years—e.g. money applied to adapting an element of a syllabus or a workshop—and now all who are involved, especially teachers and principals, must work together to capitalise on them and make the big changes to our institutions that will help integrate various new initiatives in making a single coordinated programme for each school. Sir Donald Dunstan also alluded to

> the unforeseen consequences of change. These will always occur, no matter how well . . . [we] think through the problem . . . [We] must be prepared for that, but I hope . . . [we] will not be deterred from making changes because of it, for nothing stands still . . . There will be knockers. Work on the principle that if what . . . [we] have done is not knocked, it was probably not worth doing; if . . . [we] please 50% of the people, [we] will be doing better than most.

At first, at Marion, we could only count on the support of a much smaller proportion of the school community.

The book discusses how we sought to overcome the resistance that we encountered, and the disappointments we had to endure. But the reader will discover that we did succeed in raising the performance level of many students and that we were also able to reach a whole population of students who would otherwise have left secondary school with few other experiences except failure.

2

THE SITUATION IN 1974

There is a delightful story told by Richard St.C. Johnson in 1980. I retell it out of its original context because it serves to illustrate my purpose just as well.

There is more than one way to look at the same set of circumstances. What I thought begged urgently for change, others saw as justification to hold hard to the past.

> An American millionaire—high powered, hard driving—travelling in Mexico. He saw some Mexican peon just sitting by the roadside under a tree, and got talking to him:
>
> 'Why don't you get up and do some work?'
>
> 'Why should I?' said the Mexican.
>
> 'So you can earn money, maybe become a rich man.'
>
> 'Why do I want to be rich man?' said the Mexican.
>
> 'So you can retire and you won't have to work,' said the American.
>
> The Mexican just smiled at him, and decided to go on sitting under his tree.

Like the Mexican, I could not accept that the only future for Marion was a conservative one. Unlike the Mexican, my alternative was not to just sit by, an inactive spectator.

In the first chapter I tried to state the case for a secondary school which caters for all of its students and offers them all the chance to have successful well-earned experiences. In making that claim, I am well aware that I am running counter to tradition and to the beliefs and practices of many eminent educators, who would disregard knowledge for academic insight and thought, as though they were unrelated. Those who emphasise academic insight and thought as the automatic characteristics of every well-taught student, may also think more highly of dull struggle than of illuminating investigation and discovery. Changes would not be made easily.

During its first seventeen years, Marion High School had established itself as one of Adelaide's top high schools. Not only did it have a reputation for scholarship, it was known also as a school where new ideas were being introduced. The school had 'life', its students were fiercely supportive, and its popular reputation made parents feel lucky that they lived in its zone. The Principal, Bernie Cosgrove, was a recognised leader among his colleagues. The school was led with zest and charisma. He loved to see students grow intellectually and spiritually, and he was prepared to throw aside some established patterns to achieve those ends. He thought sport was a worthy training ground for character development, but he saw that other areas had similar qualities (the arts, music, etc.). That some of these areas were not highly developed was not his fault, for he worked during a period when the Education Department gave those areas lower priority than he did. Resources were hard to come by in those days, and Bernie Cosgrove was often very much the pioneer having to depend upon local resources. That some of these areas prospered at all was quite remarkable. Most senior students felt privileged to be part of the school. At Marion the student body was largely selected by the school's reputation for academic studies, as the alternative to the technical high schools in the area, and by the upper middle class flavour about all that it did. Feeder primary schools understood these things, and screened students accordingly. Those students with 'technical' ambitions, whatever might eventually result, were clearly and unashamedly not catered for. Paradoxically, this policy was a source of much of the school's reputation. The school had a name for the strong discipline which it imposed in the first four years, but relaxed in year 12 when students enjoyed new close relationships with the staff. In reflecting upon their school years, a student could be relied on to remark, 'Well, we got through the years up to year 11!—but in year 12, that was the best year, we got to know the staff well, and they treated us as though we were equals.'

During the ten years prior to 1974, the school had acute accommodation problems which had topped in 1967, when the enrolment reached 1800. It was a time of teacher shortage. Class sizes were large in the lower school, but they were mercifully smaller for those who won through to year 12.

In the early seventies Marion High School was already facing declining enrolments from an intake zone which was shrinking step by step, but, while the dual secondary school system remained, there was little reason to change policy. Then three things happened almost simultaneously:

- **Political recognition of only one kind of secondary school, called High Schools. (1972)**
- **Explosion in school resources—staff and materials, e.g. equipment, money. (1972 - 75)**
- **Student restlessness. (1971 - 74)**

It will help us to understand the problems the school was facing in 1974 if we examine the structures and routines (both programmatic and behavioural), characteristic of metropolitan academic high schools up to this time. Any attempt to change a school must involve alterations to some of the structures and routines which exist in the school; either eliminating some, or creating new ones. It can be assumed that the existing structures have arisen out of what the school has had as its goals at some time in its immediate or more remote history. Some practices will have been set up a long way back, for reasons which are no longer remembered and which remain unquestioned. Yet, in some cases, they will still be having a profound effect on the attitudes and practices of the present school population. Parents, now a generation out of school, may inadvertently, for example, be in favour of keeping behavioural practices in the school that are no longer practised out of school, or currently believed in, like absolute quietness in the classroom at all times or excessive rote learning. Hence, when we approach the task of updating, we can only be sure about what should be kept and what should be replaced if we carefully examine what the school does, and what beliefs are reflected by the things that happen almost daily.

The Teacher's Viewpoint

To obtain a picture of the school from a teacher's viewpoint, a large number of conversations were held with staff members and their contributions to formal and informal discussions were noted. In 1974, it was not easy to have a constructive discussion because the teachers soon sensed that the new principal favoured change. But, in giving their diagnoses of the problems faced by the school, the staff provided a picture of the regularly occurring behavioural and programmatic tendencies of the school.

However, it was not hard after a brief walk about the school, a practice I followed daily, to conclude that there were serious problems. In order to tease out some of the issues, I gave out to staff randomly, questionnaires on which a range of topics were set down and spaced to allow room for answers. I asked them to describe what they thought was the school's practice in each matter and what they thought the reasons were. In this way we got a picture of the school's operations as the staff understood them. They showed that the school had the characteristics of a selective 'grammar' school.

No detailed statement was set down in 1974, nor is it likely that it would have been useful, because the staff saw no basic errors in the organisation, the offerings, or the teaching techniques employed in the school. Natural reaction against suggestions from a newcomer was strong, and any formal criticism could only be hurtful.

RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

Later, in 1978, while I was studying in Canada, in an effort to discover the effectiveness of the processes which had been entered into during the period 1974 - 77, it was necessary to obtain as detailed a description of the situation in 1973 - 74 as possible. To try to get a clear objective picture of the assumptions, attitudes, behaviour and expectations which governed the way the staff operated, I adopted a strategy used and described by Seymour Sarason, Director of the Psycho-Educational Clinic at Yale University in U.S.A. He says:

> Let us approach the general problem of outcomes by indulging in a fantasy. Imagine a being from outer space who finds himself and his invisible space platform directly above a . . . school. Being superior to earthly beings he is able to see everything that goes on in the school. But he does operate under certain restrictions: he does not

> comprehend the meaning of written or spoken language, and it can never occur to him that things go on inside of what we call heads. He can see and hear everthing, and being an 'avant garde' outer-spacer, he of course, possesses a kind of computer that records and categorises events we shall call the existing regularities. (Sarason, 1971, p.63)

I made a list of as many routines as came to mind, and then, as if from outer space, I attempted to write an objective description of each routine practice on the list. The list included 54 items like:

Access to school funds
Allotment of teaching loads
Approaches from parents
Classrooms
Daily Bulletin
Lesson lengths
Location of staff/the staff common room
Loyalty to colleagues
Opening day for teachers
Organisation of students into classes
Promotion of students
Routine administration carried out by teachers
Rules for staff; for students
School assemblies
Student access to teachers
Students and odd jobs around the school
Teachers' expectations of support staff
Teachers' methods in the classroom
Treatment of less-able students
Yard duty

In some cases, the topics were given sub-headings, e.g. under Rules for staff—punctuality, smoking, care of equipment.

From my office, several thousands of kilometres away in Canada, I set out to describe each practice as accurately as I could and to use language which was as near to neutral as possible. Visits to many schools in Australia and overseas, hind-sight and distance gave me an objectivity which had been difficult on site. The approach certainly freed the teachers who checked my statements after I had returned to Austalia. I also asked a number of teachers who had worked in other schools during that time to read each statement and to suggest amendments in regard to the regular practices, as they knew them, in their school in 1973 - 74. Among the teachers, there were some who were uncomfortable about admitting in 1979 to their 1974 practices, either because they were describing practices they had already rejected, or because they felt they might imply unfair criticisms of the people in the schools at that time. Yet the routines we were describing had grown up in good schools, for good reasons, only to be perpetuated automatically, unless some kind of upheaval brought about some change.

Here are some of the characteristics, now described in a generalised form. While they are not listed here, we can also see and ponder the fact that, in each school, there are a small number of people who have practices which are different from those followed by the majority.

- The school's single objective was to prepare students for the matriculation examinations. No doubt, many of the teachers sincerely held loftier aims, such as 'prepare young people to live in society', 'make good citizens', but whether it was a means, or an end, examination success remained the central focus.
- The classroom process was simple:
    (a) Classrooms should be quiet, orderly and authoritarian—this was the rule.
    (b) Traditional teaching methods which led, through talk, instruction, questions and notes, to major tests, were used almost exclusively.
    (c) If there was any deviation from this pattern, it was a reward—a day off or a break. Deviations from this pattern were rarely part of the teaching process.
    (d) Student ability, or age, was never a central consideration, except in terms of thickening or thinning the expectations.
    (e) Excursions and practical work were not favoured by the majority because they interfered with the other classes and the smooth running of the school.
- Other activities were subordinate to the main theme. They were a small ingredient which, taken in small quantities, helped the image of the school. They were the 'good things' you did not do because they took away valuable time. Their inclusion was an act of faith which kept them in view.
- Teacher and student rewards were to be found in test results, except for an occasional 'day off' for something special (e.g. a sports day, or an excursion).
- Student behaviour was meant to be co-operative and submissive, e.g. the student who 'did the work set' behaved in the way most people approved of.
- Organisational structures, like yard duty, formation and location of classes, and allotment of teachers, were designed to support the common aim by giving priority to the examination classes.
- Non-academic subjects took unsuccessful students (low performers) away from the main stream. Experience subjects gave a harmless and condescendingly but possibly worthwhile palliative to the curriculum. It was expected that, in general, when students failed, they simply dropped out or repeated the year.
- The physical environment was assumed. The front lawn with its trees and flower beds was approved as a 'nice' entrance, but forbidden to students for recreation.
- School rules were aimed at protecting property, and keeping students

'out' at breaks, 'away' from all but the duty teachers. Areas like staff common rooms, workshops, entrance foyers were kept as free of students as possible. The senior school was out of bounds to the junior school students.

CULTURE

The summary of school culture which follows, describes fairly typical patterns of staff behaviour. Of course, it does not intend to imply that every teacher's behaviour adheres to the pattern, but it serves to clarify common behaviours which either arose out of the general culture of the school or helped to form it.

- There was little concern for students as human beings. Yet most teachers would have disagreed, because the hard grind of academic pursuits was seen as a process which builds character.
- It was up to the student to succeed within the parameters offered him.
- The school worked well. The teachers were happy and, judged by examination results and comparisons with other schools, the central objective was satisfactorily achieved. Those students who fitted, developed well, and were satisfied with their lot.
- Yet, of the intake, selected to a degree (those who went to technical high schools included a high proportion of the less able students), only 35 - 45% stayed for year 12, and only around 54% of these matriculated. Perhaps half of the graduates entered a tertiary institution i.e. a 12% maximum of the intake of this selective 'grammar' school actually reached a tertiary institution (6% to university). This statistic, understood by most, seldom led anybody to question a system which was geared for the able few.

  Sad as this may seem today, historically the 'high' schools had been fulfilling their brief, and the staff were doing all they had been prepared for. The teachers, bright persons themselves, had been members of academic classes. Their university and teachers college training was sufficient for them to teach two subjects, one to year 12. Little time had been given to methodology, and even less to matters outside the classroom.

  The teachers were probably motivated by their own experience in academic surroundings, and this factor ensured their conservatism. The 'teacher to class' teaching pattern, interspersed with periods when children were expected to be quiet and to get on with set work, was rarely questioned. Teachers on the whole did not want to change, feared the possibility if it was ever suggested, and acted to discourage any divergence from the traditional path. If they looked forward to promotion, it was in their interest not to rock the boat. There were always some significant exceptions but they were not likely to be the teachers concerned with the academic or able students in their schools.
- While no questions were asked about differences in student and teacher behaviour, there were some interesting contradictions. While the morality was clear, teachers were not bound to behave according to the

requirements of the code. Stranger still was the teacher's attitude to subjects concerned with the arts. Most teachers felt 'educated' because they enjoyed music, attended play performances, read outside their subject, played a sport, exercised leadership in the community (especially in the country), and so on. Yet, except as a sop the arts were rarely considered part of education, except for extra-curricular sport, the annual play, opera and choir performances (for the enthusiastic teachers who wanted to try their hand or genuinely wanted the children to have the experience).

- While some teachers were thought to be progressive if they dabbled in the use of methods other than the traditional, most felt safer if they stayed with the well-tried approach.
- Since standards of performance were often not made clear over the first three years, students were deprived of any opportunity to discover their own potential and to set their own academic goals. While the teachers (and parents) had a lot of confidence in the traditional practices, one sees in them all the seeds of the discontent which welled up amongst students in the early seventies.

  It was hardly surprising, however, that when the challenge came the majority of teachers saw as remedies to growing problems the reinforcement of the principle of excluding 'poor' students, the insistence on terminal and final promotion examinations (papers not returned), and the reassertion of other factors which protected the conservative mode for the school (e.g. uniform, streaming, selection of students for academic subjects, selection of new enrolments, failing students). Under pressure from the public, teachers tended to rationalise their predicament by suggesting that some of the fault lay with 'incompetent' colleagues who could not or did not carry out the measures they advocated.
- Change, when the curriculum was questioned, usually meant variations to the syllabuses and attention was seldom drawn to how a course was presented to students. In general, the syllabus was somebody else's concern. Suggestions about books, numbers of lessons, and programmes, were published each year in the gazette. Few wanted to depart from these 'suggestions'. The cry which followed a major change to a syllabus was either 'too hard' or 'let us go back to the old stuff which students could handle', or 'the students today are not as good', or 'society is falling apart' etc. Except for content, little attention was ever given to any other educational factors.
- Conservatism was under-scored in most high schools by a history of rejection of new syllabuses, even on a trial basis.
- The traditional academic subjects were regarded as having more importance, or higher status, than those subjects which did not appear on the Public Examination Board list. The Intermediate and Leaving Examinations which were held at the end of three and four years of secondary study (years 10 and 11), respectively, did include some alternative subjects on their lists, but they were terminal courses, and

they were meant for those students who were destined to drop out of the academic race. The school was organised so that these students were streamed off without the chance of going on to 'higher' study. The status difference became attached to teachers, who were more highly regarded by colleagues and students if they taught status subjects to the able youngsters. In general, the best, most experienced teachers, were given the higher-status subjects to teach. Some saw this practice as a right which had been earned through years of service. There is a strangeness about the practice of alloting classes with the least able students to the least experienced and least able teachers.

- Teaching can be a lonely profession. Teachers often seemed to see their task in complete isolation from the work of other teachers. In these circumstances any development was by trial and error and by using any hints from colleagues which appear applicable to their own style. Visitors were not usually welcome in their classrooms. Freedom with the syllabus often had little to do with student needs. Few seniors (subject faculty leaders), were engaged in teacher development. They tended to rationalise their supervisory and developmental roles, as 'leadership by example'. As they saw it, their task was to give out programme outlines and resolve organisational problems, but most seniors did not feel accountable for the performance of their staff.
- The attitude of staff towards students in matters outside their subject field, or, in fact, outside the perceived guidelines for presenting their own subjects (e.g. a special request for help, or appeals regarding a late assignment or poor test result), rarely contained any sympathy for the student, or brought about a change in their own performance. Perhaps it was conditioned by unhappy experiences in the classroom. It must be remembered that there were classes where the teacher was fighting desperately to hold the class, and get some work done. However, there was a strong code that times other than those spent in the classroom were not to be interrupted by students. Capable year 12 students were often admitted as an exception to the rule—in many cases relations with these students were close, cordial and fruitful.
- The principal and deputies, at this time, were administrators keeping the school moving, filling gaps, seeing visitors, gathering statistics, dealing with miscreants, and so on. Deputies did little else. The school had passed through days when many inappropriate appointments had been made, because there was a shortage of trained teachers. I have no doubt that these experiences helped to blind the administration to the new factors which were operating in the schools. There was a mentality of 'hold the ship afloat' and principals and deputies could be excused for being pleased to hear that they were 'keeping a tight ship'. There was a sweet rhythm about the flow from one year to the next, and at close quarters the significance of the social changes which were slowly occurring was not easily apparent.

PRESSURE SOURCES

This rather lengthy description of the factors which emerged from an examination of the practices of high schools at that time gave a fair picture of Marion High School as an institution. Marion had probably done better than most high schools in achieving its learning goals, and possibly more than average numbers of students emerged grateful for the service they had received in their school days.

The picture of the school in !974 could now be compared with what we were doing in 1979. There was much to feel encouraged about, but the exercise alerted us to a number of inconsistencies which still existed and needed to be altered. It helped everybody concerned to be objective about our behavioural regularities and our programmes, and it made it easier for us to make adjustments. New forces were stirring in the community in the early seventies. The external indications came in 'dodgers' which emanated from universities and radical groups, claiming that schools were like prisons, where teachers were sadists and where curriculum offerings were usually irrelevant! Marion High School had suffered more than most high schools from that kind of interference. Sections of the school body had rebelled in various ways, or thought that any kind of misbehaviour, or lack of co-operation, was justified. As a result, many of the practices Marion was proud of were under attack, and the school was finding them increasingly hard to maintain. Although the phase was waning, the school was not free from attacks orchestrated outside its fences.

Student Opinion

To gain a picture of student attitudes, I adopted a different approach. In the past, many crises had brought forth various meetings with students, or students had been offered opportunities to make recommendations. On the whole it seemed to me that that strategy had failed. Little had been achieved by way of solutions or new approaches. The prefect body was traditionally the group which would give advice about the views held by students. Perhaps sharing a desire held by staff to use them as a buffer, or as advocates of traditional patterns, the prefects were loth to comment, and even less willing to act on their 'decisions'. Changes to the rules about appointment of prefects, to allow students greater say in appointments, had not been effective. Generally the students were not prepared to accept the explanations offered to justify the various practices they were challenging. Often the symbol of the challenge (e.g. uniform) was not the root cause, but students were not able to articulate their deeper concerns. It was too easy for those in authority to fob off their poorly expressed arguments. To try to get below the surface, I made myself a sort of data collector. I listened to answers given by hundreds of small gatherings, to questions like, 'How are you getting on at school?', 'What do you like doing most (least)?', 'Which is your favourite subject?', 'Why?', 'Do you enjoy school?', 'What do you hope to do when you leave?', 'How can I help you?'. The students appeared to appreciate my interest and to be ready to respond.

By and large, the students who were scoring well at school, had little complaint. However, they consistently described their progress in terms of their weakest subject or subjects, and in a sense this emphasis produced a negative view of school. They were often motivated by a fear of failure, or they reserved any expression of confidence in their future until they knew the outcome of their studies in the areas of their poorer performances. But notwithstanding these concerns, they were confident that the school would get them a pass. These students wore the uniform and were basically happy with their lot. It was disappointingly difficult to have a conversation about something in a course of study which excited their interest, especially among the senior students to whom I spoke.

However, among this group, there were some who were ready to challenge various behavioural requirements. These students usually wore their uniform badly, and found many reasons to avoid its demands. One popular target was the rule about staying on campus at breaks. Others wanted to smoke or to have the right to smoke. But deeper discussions seemed to suggest that the examples I have quoted were chosen because the students sensed that they were the tender spots and that, under pressure, the school would find it hard to sustain its position. The real bid was for dignity and for relationships with teachers which were warmer and less 'authoritative'. In the end they would challenge with, 'Why can't we be trusted?' or 'Why are we bawled out for . . . [some trivia as they saw it]?'.

It soon became clear that the main grudge against school was 'failure'. Most saw school in terms of their own failure. They felt put down and helpless. Teachers and parents had often told them to work harder, but they had tried that and it had not worked. So the experience of failure was reinforced and their self-esteem was diminished. We had begun 'levelling' (chapter 7) and the gratitude of students was apparent. But I learned that we were not 'levelling' very well—that some teachers had not changed anything but the marking scheme. I also found that students wanted to be 'liked' by their teachers (as nice dumb things, if necessary!). I learned a lot about teachers' prejudices, and some of my own. The students saw the double values that were about them. Why didn't the teacher keep appointments? Why didn't teachers give help when it was asked for? Why do homework which seemed to have little purpose? 'We want freedom', they said. They did not mean licence, and they resented the fact that teachers always seemed to give that meaning to the word. I discovered that they did not know how to use initiative, give leadership or exercise self-discipline; nor did teachers know how to help a student develop these attributes. I learned a lot about 'boredom' in the classroom, and about the frustrations that they should not have been experiencing. One valuable source of information was the log book of the focus room (see chapter 20) where the teachers had recorded the gist of discussions with students who had been referred to that room after some conflict situation had occurred in the classroom.

We discovered that many of these students had nowhere to do homework except on the floor or on their beds, and that many came to school without breakfast. They told us about the importance of part-time jobs to some homes, and about other homes where both parents worked and students were expected to look after younger brothers and sisters and carry out many other time-consuming chores. Some challenged what they saw as the irrelevance of some subjects for those who were under pressure to become breadwinners for the family.

They also gave us information about what they considered to be injustices in the classroom, and how they resented the practice of teachers who offered rewards to youngsters who lived in more favourable circumstances for things in which they could not take part. How, for example, they had developed a hatred for reading because their parents could not hear them read while they were young and how this had led them to reject school. We learned how some teachers who appeared to enjoy placing students in situations from which they could not extricate themselves, expected them to have resources which were not available to them, or held tests without warning, seemingly for no better reason than to 'prove' the students' incompetence or inferiority.

Another broad area of information came from the students of different ethnic backgrounds. They had problems with the English language, but (obviously!) that did not mean that they were unintelligent. They wanted to learn. Nobody seemed to want to help them.

The process helped the students to develop confidence in me. I acted upon some of the complaints, and in doing so, heard a lot about the teachers' problems. We had practices which worked against the solutions I sought. We needed some new approaches and clearly the teachers saw it as my job to provide these answers. (Not that they were always willing to accept my solutions without a lot of resistance and argument—I had already found that the lot of the agent of change is not an easy one).

Views of Parents

Encouraged by the outcome of these informal 'meetings' with students, I sought to use a similar approach with parents. Formal gatherings were achieving very little of substance. Random conversations soon taught me that very few parents had other than high aspirations for their children. I also learned how they used their own school days as a basis for judgements, and that most (especially those from working class homes) did not have very good memories of school. They were too anxious to tell how they had come to 'know' they were dumb. It was also clear that they would protect their children from teachers whom they saw in the same image as the teachers in their bad memories. They saw it as the school's job to have their child enjoy school, and to succeed there. They clearly favoured the teacher who 'liked' their child—they confirmed that the child worked harder for those 'rare' gems.

The outcome of all of the informal interaction of these meetings was proving to be useful. The parents and students were confirming the nature of the school's culture that had emerged (only to be borne out later) through an examination of the various practices of the school. The successful students and their parents were the least likely to complain because they were the winners, both approved and rewarded by the system.

New Strategies

Through these strategies, we were developing a valid description of the problems that Marion High School was experiencing. We were also gathering a summary of the attitudes and expectations of teachers, students and parents.

These are the kinds of things which are seldom thought about when school reform is under consideration. Each school has its own way of doing things. The significance of any regular part of the programme will tend to be taken for granted, and will seldom be understood, unless alternatives are examined. If the stimulus for change comes from outside, the matter is not likely to be readily acceptable to the staff. The problem is to get at the factors which affect individual students and their learning and to relate these elements to the broad issues and purposes of the school.

The immediate concerns were the size of classes in the junior school compared with the senior school, the failure of the junior school syllabuses and the way material was presented by the teachers. Once a change is contemplated it becomes necessary to alter some of the routines and structures. We needed to make changes to the ways in which teachers and students interacted, to improve the relationships between them and to give a fresh feel to the institution.

Outside Influences

That Marion High School had to tackle these internal troubles of its own making was enough, but the changes in society which were part of the scene of the early seventies, gave them exaggerated proportions at Marion. Why? Under the new zoning scheme for the single kind of secondary school decreed by the Labor Government in 1972, Marion found itself unfavourably placed geographically. The school was located within a lower socio-economic area which in turn fell within the middle-class crescent of the city of Adelaide.

Furthermore, the area provided housing for numbers of immigrants from countries which were not English-speaking. Add the fact of falling numbers, and we had the three ingredients which studies elsewhere have shown to be associated with popular disenchantment (e.g. in Brunswick, Victoria—Field & Sullivan, 1979). To make matters worse, as already mentioned, Marion was probably more prone to be a target of criticism from tertiary students because it was situated near a university. Inevitably some of the staff members took sides.

Under these pressures, it is hardly surprising that the school was slow to make changes. The good old days were not far behind, and most people anticipated their return. However, there were those parents, now bound to send their children to Marion High School who would have preferred them to attend a technical high school. In fact, just prior to the change in government policy, almost 70% of the secondary students living close to the school had attended a technical school. The promised additional 'technical' facilities took three years to materialise—long enough for a body of discontent to grow and to be operating within the school. While the move toward a single kind of secondary school had in general been a popular move, the dissident forces within Marion in 1974 included a significant number of parents who felt deceived because a 'technical' type education, which they saw as a pathway to a job for their children, was not available. They were unaware that there was a shortage of facilities, and that they would not be available to their children in anything like the way provided by the old technical schools during the time their children would be at school. An articulate, though small part of the high school council supported the demand for more technical studies and persistently encouraged extension of the programme in that direction. Talk about the values of a general education gave little comfort to those who saw a direct connection between technical studies and the prospects of a job.

Resistance to Change

On the other hand, the majority of members of the parent bodies and the high school council was not in favour of a general change of policy, because the majority of the councillors and committee members had children who were well served by the old regime. Most members were vaguely conscious that problems existed, but many identified them with the new principal, who needed to adapt to Marion High School. Alongside these difficulties, the women's auxiliary and the parents and friend's association had lost much of their support. Although the downward trend had been apparent for three or four years, it was a singular, understandable miscarriage of logic that they associated their problems with the new principal.

There was no mistaking the influential nature of those who did not want change. The comments of some members at meetings were not designed to increase my confidence, and I believe I conveyed a certain tentativeness in my comments at meetings and during the casual conversations I had over cups of tea afterwards. After all, it is difficult to justify changes to unwilling hearers, and I discovered that there is no reply that does not seem abjectly defensive!

Many members of the parent bodies had given excellent service over many years. They were ready to rest after their efforts to raise money for the new hall. Their weariness was justified. The majority of those who held office were not only unconvinced of the need for change, but they seemed convinced that 'no change' was the best policy. Few appreciated that the real agony came from alterations to political philosophies, and social values, and from demographic movements. But new goals and procedures had to be established, and a new generation of students had arrived whose parents were not represented on any of the school bodies. It was not an easy atmosphere to enter as principal. The first year in any post has its difficulties, especially at the end of a significantly successful period. Yet the problems the school faced could not be ignored, nor could they be remedied by an attempt to recapture happier days from the past.

Perhaps it is time to go back to the beginning of this chapter, to re-read Johnson's story, and to reflect upon the way you, as principal, might have reacted to the situation in which I found myself in 1974!

3

SET OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

With the situation at Marion High School very much in the pattern of the common realities applicable to most secondary schools, it was apparent that the school had to undertake new directions. What the details of these would be could not be predicted with any certainty, but there were several useful possibilities.

In 1974, the school population was drawn mostly from the local area and from a clearly defined zone, a strip of the city about six kilometres long on either side of the main southern highway. The students came from a cross-section of society and they were distributed in proportions which had close similarities with the composition of the population of the State.

It was an obvious choice to conceive the high school to be a neighbourhood comprehensive school. In this idea there was recognition of a diverse group of people who would have a wide range of needs which could be serviced by the school.

The concept of a neighbourhood school led on to considerations of community education. As enrolments fell it became apparent that it might be possible to involve other community groups in the school either as students or as members of groups who would use any spare facilities in the day-time and during periods which were out of school hours, including holidays.

Hence we were able to list *Aims* for the school:

- To provide effective, worthwhile and successful educational programmes for five years for every student who wishes to come.
- To make a programme which connects contemporary challenges to traditional value systems, so that the lasting human value of one's own sense of worth is fostered.
- To incorporate, in proportion to individual need, those curriculum elements which will contribute to each student's social, intellectual, vocational and leisure-time growth.
- To develop attitudes of understanding and concern for other people, to learn about people, and, by being among them, to care for some of them, with the full awareness that our own diversity makes for a rich and satisfying human pattern.
- To help students, and indeed all members of the community, to discover and to rediscover the delight in challenges accepted, and the excitement of fulfilment which comes through a lively commitment to the community, its welfare and its pursuits.

In essence, the list still stands, although the wording was varied a little when they were revised in 1984. As time went on we realised that people from different ethnic backgrounds among the school's enrolment brought with them more than a right for sympathy and consideration. We began to appreciate that they came from a large number of countries and as such they brought a wealth of cultural enrichment with them. It followed that it would be worthwhile for the school to attempt deliberately to use this rich and extensive resource.

With the addition, later, of a reference to all cultures, and, still later, to 'cope with rapid changes in knowledge' and a specific mention of 'punctuality', the *Objectives* which emerged from the aims remain as they were first determined.

The programme was to have a number of overlapping elements:

- Encouragement of corporate responsibility among all members of the school community (students, staff, parents), through participation in decision-making and appreciation of decisions which are, of necessity, made by others.
- Recognition of the importance of one's personal image. Considerations included appropriate dress, behaviour and manners, healthy habits, punctuality, dependability and loyalty, initiative and leadership, and, if circumstances demand it, co-operation as a participating member of a group under a leader.
- Growth of attitudes in that there is an awareness of an adolescent's need for a sense of personal and corporate loyalty.
- Appreciation of all cultures as sources of enrichment for the whole community.
- Sound scholarship as an aid to the choice of a vocation, personal security, and the means to cope with rapid changes in knowledge.
- Promotion of circumstances which maximise motivation to learn.
- Appreciation of, and responsibility for, the environment, the buildings, the grounds, the local district, by matching formal pursuits with informal homestead (home-room) experiences.
- Establishment of an atmosphere of trust and confidence between people of all ages.

The first draft was prepared by me after a general discussion with the staff who were asked to suggest items for an eventual statement. It was really an 'unfreezing' exercise, and I do not think that many took it very seriously. My ideas were examined by a number of people at my specific request and some refinements did result. A deputy-principal did some excellent work by improving the wording and generally ensuring that each statement was saying what was intended and that the intent could be understood by its readers.

There was little dispute about the broad aims. Both the staff and the high school council accepted the final draft with little debate. Once people realised that the school population required us to respond to more than the academically able, the aims were acceptable. One councillor took the opportunity to issue a challenge to me, as principal, to see to it that the aims were accomplished. Most of the other members nodded agreement with varying degrees of conviction. So there was a difference in perspective. On the one hand, the majority thought that the school would go on doing its things with or without a considered set of aims and objectives. On the other hand, there was a minority who saw the statement as a sort of checklist against which the school's performance could be judged. In fact, at the time of review in 1979, the statement did provide a strong base for evaluation.

However, at the outset not everybody, indeed only a few, had any idea of the extent of the implications of the statement for their work.

In similar fashion, the objectives were received with little debate but discussions did provide some clues about how different groups gave very different emphasis and priority to each item. For example, some parent groups gave strong support to vocational aims while teachers were inclined to interpret objectives in broader, more liberal terms.

Important concerns were voiced by parents who were interested in different vocational areas, or wanted our priorities to serve their strongly-held religious or political values. Hence the discussion generated a certain amount of fear that the particular priorities of sub-groups would not be given the recognition they deserved.

To offset these fears we quickly moved toward a clear general policy position, namely, to respond to any perceived need or demand so long as a sufficiently large group of students was involved. In the modern language area, this decision was to lead us to include every group, even if only one student was served. In this way we were able to accommodate the various sub-groups.

This general policy became the springboard from which many subjects and programmes were launched. To keep faith, each new requirement had to be included in the programme and the difficulties associated with its inclusion had to be overcome. The challenge to the administration was to make the policy cost-effective in terms of cash and human resources. Consequently the school was drawn into considerations which other schools did not face until the eighties. This challenge led to another policy decision. To accommodate the various options we agreed to integrate the common elements of each proposal and so bring together as many sub-groups as possible. For example, many subjects favoured by traditional academic students were also required by students with traditional technical or commercial interests. In another example, we were able to include large numbers of languages by combining the 'English' component as much as possible.

To implement the two policy decisions—to respond to all groups in an integrated school—it was necessary to hold the groups in balance. Making adequate provisions for each one would draw unevenly upon our resources, but it soon became clear that their supporters were not particularly concerned about any disparity when their particular interest was being met.

In the end, the 'health' of the school would be determined by the modus operandi of the staff. Hence, some of the established practices and attitudes of many (most) teachers had to change.

Yet

> the reality is that schools continue to be evaluated in terms of achievement scores in tool subjects and context areas of study, and these circumstances reinforce the rigid, traditional patterns of academic expectation that militate against all students who fall below the median on standardised tests and especially against learning of disabled students. (Marsh, Gearheart and Gearheart, 1978, p.42)

Real change in this area would take a long time and require a large focus of effort, and sometimes the action would be contrary to the opinions of vocal elements in the community. For example, the 'standards' debate placed its emphasis upon 'return to the basics'. Yet the evidence was strongly for fundamental changes in the classrooms at all levels of student competence.

There was much in the findings of researchers (chapter 4) which, by its nature and repetition, was compelling and, it should have made conservative teachers feel uncomfortable. Like new discoveries in medicine, practitioners could only ignore them at their peril. Any real progress could only come through making the changes to pedagogical practices and organisation that the new information pointed to. The teachers would need much support and time had to be 'bought' so that they could consider and learn how to implement the changes which were necessary.

To summarise

> analysis indicates three critical entry points in seeking to close the gap between the observed condition of our schools and where we would want them to be. The first of these pertains to the initial pedagogical skills developed in future teachers, the second is the updating of these skills on the job, and the third is the continuous reconstruction of schooling to meet the changing conditions of communities and of society in general. (Goodlad, 1970, p.103)

In our case we were forced to enter all three together—new staff had to be introduced to new techniques, teachers had to change and internalise a new job description and there were new structures to be created and adopted.

Swift and extensive though the community changes impinging on the school had been, there was no certainty that new important changes would not arise in the immediate future. In fact, the fall in the number of students who lived in the neighbourhood, the political decision to abandon zoning and the rapid advance of the post-industrial age were all to make a considerable impact before a decade had passed. In some ways these influences were to be our salvation because they each gave impetus in areas already in line. But they also created new pressures and new tensions. On the credit side we were probably more flexible than most schools and more able to respond to new requirements.

The Education Department was also echoing the impact of social demands in its statement called 'Purposes of Schools' (1971). In the amplification which accompanied the statement, a number of observations followed the introductory comment—'As the social context changes, so does the role of the school'. There were some observations which reflected trends at Marion. For example, in summary:

- Students are tending to stay longer at school or to return to school after a period of absence.
- School facilities are being made available to the public.
- Diversity of schools is being encouraged.
- Parents and community are being invited to advise on curriculum and budgets.
- A wider selection of courses is being made available.
- Schools have become more autonomous.

At other points in the document, reference was made to a pluralistic society, family living patterns, sex roles, patterns of work and leisure, community involvement in decision-making, to note but a few of the more relevant factors. Although it was thought necessary to revise the document in 1981, in some ways the 1971 statement was ahead of its time. Although the Education Department people were to counsel Marion to 'slow down', by 1974 Marion was subject to many pressures for change.

As principals, we were advised by our senior administrators to take only those steps from which we could pull back. Autonomy was to be tempered by approval to 'pilot' an innovation. It seemed that the 'Purposes' document was really meant to be an accommodating one, which placed the school in the middle of a tug-of-war between conservative and radical forces. The 'pilot' policy was wise, except that it failed to recogise changes affecting the whole school and the fact that we were embarked upon a movement which could not be totally reversed. As I saw it, taking the initiative at the local level was the one way I had of keeping control and maintaining some sort of balance in the school, in very difficult circumstances.

4

COMPELLING RECENT RESEARCH FINDINGS

The objective of this chapter is to raise a small number of issues which have recently been the subject of research in the western world (including Australia). The findings of this research have been of such consistency that they cannot properly be ignored. It is not the intention to review the various studies, but to highlight the issues in point.

This book addresses the concerns of a school when it attempts to improve the quality of the education it offers. The approach is often pragmatic, and the evidence has often been gathered during visits to other secondary schools in many countries. But in 1978 I had the opportunity to stop and examine what the researchers were finding, and to sit back and take a detached view. There were occasions when I did not like what I found, but there were times when the soundness of the research models and the similarities in the findings compelled me to change my position about some issues. I had been reared on the Australian tendency to suspect theory as impractical, and to modify current practice by trying this or that in the hope that I might stumble on an answer to a problem. Yet if real progress is to be made educators must respect good research and respond to its conclusions. To be effective, teachers must 'master general principles of human development, learning, motivation and teaching skills, and attempt to apply and enhance this general knowledge by the careful study of student needs'. (Good & Brophy, 1977, p.571)

Personal Style

At the beginning I was surprised to find how little personality had to do with outcome. (See Dunkin & Biddle, 1974) It is the teachers who have high (but realistic) expectations, and who love youngsters to succeed at challenging, attainable goals, who gain lasting quality in their work. The best teachers have all sorts of personalities: they range from the aggressive to the most gentle, the quietest to the most flamboyant enthusiast, and so on, and, of course, can be of either sex. But a quality teacher expects children to succeed amd does things which ensure their success. (See Brophy & Good, 1974)

During the last fifteen years or so, teachers have been pressed by some educators and members of the public to adopt methods which give a high emphasis to individual progression, rather than teacher-to-class methods. There seems to be little evidence (see Rosenshine, 1979), to support the claim that individual progression produces better student achievement, probably because most teachers find the management implications beyond their capacity as managers and organisers.

The balance is on the side of teacher-to-class interactions. There seems to be reason to believe that teachers' personal styles are not particularly significant. Among the variables, those which arise out of the teachers' attitudes towards their students, each seen as a whole person, appear to dominate.

> The most effective teachers first establish rapport with the students and then communicate an active demand to them. (Good & Brophy, 1977, p.402)

However, when we focus upon student achievement, there must be caution because researchers have had 'more success in finding significant relationships between teacher praise, acceptance, criticism and effective outcomes in pupils than with pupil achievement'. (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974, p.131)

'Teacher expectations of the intellectual ability of pupils are a determinant of the intellectual growth'. (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974, p.128) Brophy and Good (1974) describe the process by which teachers' expectations of pupil achievement can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Their model suggests that

> (a) The teacher forms differential expectations of students' performance.
> (b) He then begins to treat children differently in accordance with his differential expectations.
> (c) The children respond differentially to the teacher because they are being treated differently by him.
> (d) In responding to the teacher, each child tends to exhibit behaviour which complements and reinforces the teacher's particular expectations of him.
> (e) As a result, the general academic performance of some children will be enhanced while that of others will be depressed, with changes being in the direction of teachers expectations.
> (f) These effects will show up in the achievement tests given at the end of the year, providing support for the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' notion. (Quoted in Dunkin and Biddle, 1974, p.129)

Given that the student likes his teacher, 'high praise is a powerful determinant of pupil learning', especially, or perhaps only, when that praise is applied only when pupil responses are correct'. (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974, p.130)

Thus teachers who are keen for their students to succeed, and get on well with them, do encourage better learning 'as a self-fulfilling prophecy'. Given the power to influence learning, the danger, that teachers who have negative attitudes towards students will do irreparable damage, is overwhelming.

Students at Risk

Who then are the 'students at risk', that is, the students who, characteristically, are those most likely to fall out of school or perform poorly because they are not well served by the school? There are many categories:

- the gifted and talented
- the girls keen on Maths and Science, and boys with a leaning towards the arts and humanities

- the very able, interested in the performing arts
- able students not as keen on traditional methods (the concrete thinkers)
- very slow students expected to spend long hours at abstract subjects
- the students without facilities at home for homework
- the students from homes lacking resources
- non-English speaking students with poor English competence
- youngsters from working-class homes
- students expected to repeat a year
- unattractive youngsters with very low self image, e.g. those who are fat, terribly thin, disfigured, clumsy, not sporty etc.
- students expected to work in a poor physical environment
- those with poor self-image
- girls or boys in an environment which assumes that they are less able
- those of middle or lower ability
- those with high aspirations, but low performance
- those who have been ill or have had some major distraction from study.

Collectively the track records of these groups have given schools a poor public image. For example, schools with large populations of students with non-English-speaking European or Asian backgrounds have an asset, yet they must work hard to keep public confidence. Researchers have identified lists of elements relevant to the building of public confidence in school. Take, for example, the list reported by Baumgart and Power to the Annual Conference of the Australian College of Education (1983):

- Higher retention rates at the upper secondary level (Tannock, 1983), even if the changes are relatively slow and only partly for educational reasons (Power, 1983).
- A diversity of school types in public and private sectors and a blurring of this division.
- Greater participation by adults in formal schooling.
- A broadening of curriculum options along with efficient ways of teaching communicative and numerical skills.
- Greater use by communities of the school as a learning resource.
- Extensions of the school into the home through the further advancement of modern technology.
- An emphasis on part-time formal education along with part-time work, or other activity (Crittenden, 1981).
- The need and the motivation for continuing education.
- Greater use of community resources by the school.
- Demands for further education by greater numbers of retired persons.
- Greater emphasis on a caring environment.
- Opportunities to build a portfolio of formal credits for school achievements in lieu of certificates at particular stages.
- The availability of learning packages for hire or loan from school resource centres.
- Further work opportunities for community members as semi-professionals in the school organisation.
- Longer hours of opening and greater flexibility in time-tabling. (Board of Teacher Education, Queensland, 1982)

(Baumgart & Power, 1983, pp.50-51).

Most schools have little chance to select those who enrol, but they do have most of the say over what happens to the students who do enrol. There is ample opportunity to include in policy and practice many of the factors on the list and to address the special problems of the sub-groups of students who have lacked attention.

Conditions for Learning

> The basic purpose of schools is to help children learn 1) to value learning 2) to want to learn 3) how to learn 4) to value knowledge 5) to acquire knowledge 6) to understand knowledge and 7) to behave according to knowledge. (Frymier, 1974, p.15)

R. Jones (cited in Watts, 1981, p.5) establishes three conditions which he says must operate together, if youngsters' learning is to be at its best possible level:

1 The student feels secure, i.e. feels comfortable in the environment, which must be friendly, supportive, caring, physically pleasant.
2 The student has become competent at all of the skill she/he needs (the teacher's job).
3 Rigorous challenges are negotiated with the student at a level at which he or she can succeed in achieving the goals set (what Jones calls threat).

The important aspect here, is the togetherness of the three factors.

Rejection of School

'Persons whose motivations are different, have very different kinds of self-concepts, values, time perspectives and personality structures.' (Frymier, 1974, p.6) Unenthusiastic students are often extremely defensive because they are afraid of the future and have poor concepts of themselves. Obsessed with the present, they prefer the concrete and the particular. They are unlikely to take any initiatives involving new ventures.

> They are likely to be characterised in having a polarised thought process rather than seeing ideas as points along a continuum. (Frymier, 1974, pp.8 - 10)

There seem to be four major reasons why students might reject school, or, though attending, would be listed among the disinclined, apathetic or unmotivated.

The biggest group of students who reject school are those who have experienced repeated failure, a reinforcement of their failure to achieve. (See Atkinson, 1964) The experience may have started in the early years of school, but the number in this category increases with each year of school. It would seem that, in spite of the rhetoric, the orientation of schools toward identifying the failures is far from dead. It is often believed that threat of failure motivates effort. Maybe for some, but these youngsters will probably come from supportive middle-class homes. Those from working-class backgrounds will have the same hopes but be inclined to withdraw in the face of general repetitive failure. There are two myths here. One is that the possibility of failure is a strong motivator (of any student); in fact, encouragement and reasonable challenge are far stronger motivators. The other is that the aspirations of youngsters from poor backgrounds are less high or strong than those from more affluent homes.

> A great proportion of students are leaving school already convinced that they have failed in their life's ambitions. Others have consistently failed in their school tasks since the day they entered. These are the kind of children who form the hard core of problem children . . . and they must be added to the numbers who have learnt from school only the belief that they are inferior. To the extent that they are damaged by this belief, the whole of society is damaged. (McLaren, 1970, p.83)

The second group of school rejectors are those who dislike the cultural environment (see Karabel & Halsey, 1977), which may be far removed from their own, or they may be unable or unwilling to conform to some element of the essentially Anglo-Saxon middle-class culture which is found in most schools—factors like low self-image, behavioural expectations, relationships with staff, silly rules, unnecessary routines, extreme regimentation or even the physical environment. They may be able to cope with scholarship but their interests are elsewhere. They may see school as a place where too much time is given to talk by teachers, or they may be poor listeners. Increasingly expected to operate as adults away from school, they may be keen to make their own decisions, to choose their own options.

Others resent not having access to subjects taught by the school, being blocked by some aspect of the organisation. Some are annoyed at having to accept a 'whole package', or at not being allowed to 'change their minds'. And what about 'choosing their own teachers' or being able to avoid a teacher they 'hate' for some reason which may seem trivial to others, and certainly cannot be regarded as condemnation of the teacher, but, nevertheless, stirs angry feelings in the student. (See, for example, Power, 1983) Must the student always be expected to cope? Adults are often not so virtuous.

Motivation

Motivation is a complex of many attitudes (intellectual curiosity, achievement, rewards, acceptance in the school, sex, learning environment, external factors like socially-based restraints, parental aspirations). But contrary to commonly held beliefs, challenge and enjoyment are basic requirements of well-motivated students.

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (adapted by Owen & Steinhoff, 1976, p.119), suggests that, only when physiological requirements are met, can motivation develop at the next level and so on. Thus only students who feel secure and socially acceptable will want to do what is needed to satisfy their self-esteem, including the effort to reach their school achievement goals.

At any fixed age there is ample evidence of a continuum of abilities and a prospect that each of the students will change their positions on the continuum as they grow older (see chapter 7). Yet courses are often stereotyped as though there is only one type of human competence which all students have in varying fixed amounts. Schools must avoid structures, which on the surface open students to wider choice, but have, within them, subtle sifting systems by which 'failures' are removed to 'low status' pursuits or early removal from school.

> Motivation involves creating conditions that make school in general, and each task within it meaningful and worthwhile enough to sustain active involvement. The needs and performances involved . . . differ among individuals . . . so that teachers will need to . . . be flexible in their motivational behaviour. (Good & Brophy, 1977, p.375)

Teachers would do well to remember that the school is a 'learning institution' and that tardy students are most likely to be motivated through setting and meeting reasonable, yet testing, instructional goals. The wide variety of abilities, interests, lifestyles and socio-economic backgrounds to be found in most secondary schools presses teachers to be converted to those attitudes which enable them to be adaptable in the approaches, methods, topics and materials they choose. It is suicidal to school success to rigidly expect students to fall in with their teachers' personal preferences. It follows, but nevertheless needs to be pointed out, that alternative arrangements of classes and subjects cannot solve the motivation problems being experienced in many schools. Organisational change can do no more than facilitate instructional diversification inside classrooms.

> 'It is a mistake to suppose that a good material environment is the chief determinant of educational opportunity'. While provision of buildings, equipment and teachers is a first step, 'if the child for whom this arrangement of externals was included as opportunity does not perceive it as such' the dichotomy could increase rather than reduce alienation from school. 'There is an interaction which is more important . . . the values, aims and assumptions that are personified by the teacher on the one hand, and the attitudes and aspirations of parents' and their children on the other. (Fyfield, 1970, pp.88 - 104)

It is too easy for the school to forget that students have parents, who will probably reflect the character of the community of which they are a part. Research about the influence of home, peers and media upon decisions made by students shows how strong the family influence continues to be. (See for example, Marjoribanks, 1980) On this evidence it is foolhardy for teachers to act as though each student must fit their personal sets of life assumptions. The mother, especially, often takes a central place in influencing decisions about her child's education. It is essential, then, that her basic attitudes be understood by teachers, and that a school takes care to ensure that a mother knows what it has to offer and its reasons for doing what it does. Acceptance of adults into the classroom has been shown to modify peer influences, and to be an important factor in giving more purpose to students who would otherwise lack motivation.

The high incidence of gifted and talented youngsters who do not perform well is also surprising to many people. These students may have found their lessons unchallenging or have discovered that the spare time they could generate very easily is likely to be filled, if at all, with repetitive exercises of the kind they have already mastered.

Teacher Attitudes and Methods

There is ample evidence that teachers (especially secondary teachers) prefer to teach able middle-class students. They tend predominantly to use methods which suit that group—formal teacher-to-class instruction aimed at revealing information. Many ignore poor achievers or leave them behind on the grounds that they are unsuitable for their subject and their classes.

> In many respects traditional practices of secondary schools *create* unnecessary problems . . . By the time a complex combination of adverse factors has been operating . . . it has become absolutely essential that a multi-faceted interaction be made. (Marsh, Gearheart and Gearheart, 1978, p.38)

But while it is reasonable to assume that most teachers will want to be effective in the classroom, faulty expectations may lead to 'self-fulfilling prophecies' which represent ineffective teaching, or cause a serious deterioration of students' motivation. Care must be taken because the outcome of their teaching is likely to be determined by whatever teachers prophesy. For example, Brophy observed that 'the teachers were treating the highs in ways that would encourage these students to seek them out, while their treatment of the lows was more likely to induce alienation'. (Brophy, 1974, p.99) Having first established rapport with their students they must 'then communicate an "active" demand to them' (p.402)

'The critical issue is the accuracy of the expectations and the flexibility with which an expectation is held. Inaccurate expectations will do damage . . . ' (Good & Brophy, 1977, p.383)

For example, the teacher of a low achiever, whose condition is regarded as unchangeable, may soon fail to assign work with sufficient challenge to raise the student's achievement level. Thus even accurate perceptions, applied inflexibly, may soon become inaccurate to the detriment of the child.

> Over time students develop an achievement pattern which is known to themselves, to other students, and to the teacher, operating like any other status ranking. Many students and teachers seem to believe that there is one general human ability with smart high-achieving students and 'dumb' low achieving students at opposite ends of the continuum. There are also measurable achievement differences in these two groups: no doubt some of the performance differential is due to individual differences in ability at skills but . . . some of the variance in performance is due to the expectations for competence held by teachers and students. (Cohen, 1972, p.445)

Uneven Performance

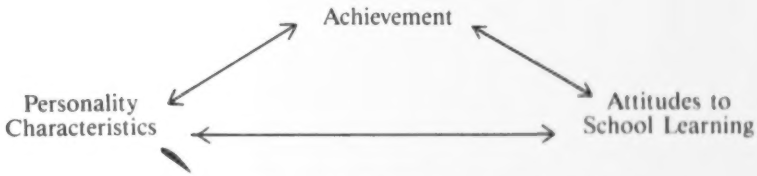
That students perform unevenly across a range of subjects is readily evident, but many school systems use promotion regulations which clump performances together and promotion depends on the 'average' or 'combined' marks or grade.

Whatever theory one might support, the facts remain. Since promotion by average kills incentive and, away from school, is contrary to practices which normally reflect individual strengths, school systems which treat subjects separately gain better responses from students. This outcome grows in importance as we descend the ability ladder.

About Encouragement

Keeves proposes a performance cycle (see diagram following) which serves to illustrate how a student's 'attitudes to learning and his view of himself, influence his future achievement at school. If any part of this cycle could be modified or altered, then marked changes in performance at school might occur'.

Figure 2.



The Performance Cycle (Keeves, 1972, p.244)

Gagne (1985, p.231) asserts that 'favourable attitudes arise from the *experience of success* (which is itself dependent upon reinforcement)'.

'A friend, parent, teacher may help . . . by offering courage, encouragement and support in the face of blind alleys, setbacks and temporary failures' and 'be agents in fostering independent learning in others'. (Jourand, 1972, p.74) At best the forces of the support will be upon encouraging the student to continue to seek and to try maybe in spite of a series of failures.

King includes 'good encouragement' among the necessities for personal development and comments that 'the immense tide of change swirling round us makes "it" more necessary'. (1966, p.69) Thus a school performance is linked directly to the student's self-image and set of attitudes towards learning.

Our experience bears out the argument among researchers that a reprimand for poor performance usually brings a better result in the short term, but not if it is continually reinforced as failure. They also note that praise (coaxing) does not help very poor performers and that very bright students are not influenced by attempts to put them down.

But the latter conclusion draws attention to the need for a teacher to take note of the circumstances in which praise or blame is given. Praise for work the student knows to be poor will have a negative effect. There is a time to bounce and a time to praise or observe neutrality. Background makes a difference. A child well-supported at home, for instance, is much more likely to tolerate failure than one from a home where there is no support, or where the parents anticipate failure and want to offer protection. The latter is common among students from homes of working-class parents, where it is more likely that the parents have bad memories of their school days. The results also show that the teacher needs to 'know his students', and to allot praise and blame in ways and with timing which are decided with a particular individual in mind. Other studies show that constructive, sensitively-worded notes written on students' work act as a stimulus and lead to better performance.

Similar comments can be made about competitive, as compared with co-operative, approaches. The latter style usually gives a better result, but sometimes groups of students and/or some individuals are spurred on by the challenges competition brings. Probably this latter group contains 'the winners', or those who feel that they can win. Like repeated failure or reprimand, repeated loss in a competitive atmosphere leads to poorer effort. 'Measures of criticism of students by teachers are negatively related to measures of achievement'. (Keeves, 1972, p.80)

Students with Non-English Backgrounds

About one student in five in South Australia first spoke and normally speaks a language other than English at home. Most of these children will be disadvantaged at school by the difficulties they experience in using the English language. Those who migrated between the ages of nine and twelve have the greatest disadvantage since they commenced their education in a language other than English. Because teachers commonly, but wrongly, relate competence in English to intelligence, the students often feel deep resentment, especially when the school offers no support for a problem for which they are not responsible.

Many researchers (for example, Marjoribanks and others—Marjoribanks, 1980, p.67), confirm that the aspirations of parents with non-English backgrounds to achieve academically are higher than those normally found among English speakers, and that these parents have a strong influence on the achievements of their children and related attitudes such as their persistence in the face of difficulty. As a result, the proportion of students with non-English-speaking backgrounds increases in the senior secondary years of school, both from a desire to stay at school and as a chance to catch up.

Patterns of various cultures differ to such a degree that 'educators who work with children from different groups need to develop programmes with varied environmental goals, if children's school achievements are to be influenced' (Marjoribanks, 1980, p.81). While classes with several nationalities and/or English-speaking sub-groups present will be complex, it is so fundamental to student progress to establish an atmosphere favourable to effective learning, that prior concern for differences between groups becomes an unavoidable part of the approach to each student and the pedagogy adopted by the teachers.

Lambert and Tucker (1972), working in Quebec, show the advantage to children's achievement when their parents have mastered the second language. Marjoribanks (1980) supports this conclusion. Working, as we were at Marion, with young adult students whose parents often had not mastered English, we established the value of resting second-language (English) instruction (formally and informally) upon the student's mastery of his or her first language. In short we were able to raise the student's academic achievement to something like a level consistent with intelligence by restructuring the learning environment (see chapter 19).

Use of Time

That traditional patterns of distributing the use of time are often inefficient is documented by Berliner (1979). Hence matters such as the length of the school day, the inclusion of longer periods to accommodate activity, length of breaks, positioning of pastoral endeavours, and the balance of in-class and independent study-time become the subjects of much of chapters 14 - 16, and 22 - 23.

Assessment of Student Achievement

When marks or grades are the issue, based on a regular form of testing which is believed to be the central motivator for learning, then, as Evans & Stephens suggest, students will tend to cheat and 'view their teacher as a manipulable object'. (1973, p.138). The teaching will stereotype to fit the system and individualisation and diversification of learning opportunities will tend to be stultified. An ability to read and write then becomes the centre of practice and special classes will be formed to 'remedy' reading and writing failure, while other communicative skills are neglected.

A broader approach might recognise other capacities, and, at the same time, offer assistance to students who are having learning difficulties in any of their subjects.

Non-verbal abilities may be assessed in some alternative manner, so that it is not necessary for all youngsters to demonstrate their ability in a written examination.

Communication

The skills of good communication are well documented. Those schools whose staff submit to the disciplines of the best techniques are happier places, where teachers experience high levels of co-operation from each other, parents and students (see chapter 24).

Other Areas

There are other areas which could be mentioned. However the topics that have been raised all influenced the practices adopted by Marion. They account for the kind of time, reporting, care and service structures in the school, and the emphases upon success motivation, levelling of students, and the mix of methods the teachers were encouraged to use in their teaching.

5

FOUR GOOD IDEAS

With a set of aims and objectives agreed to and some broad procedural policies established, we needed some ideas around which we could fashion our aims into appropriate practices.

The task was not to make a complete change, for the old school contained many characteristics which should be retained because they were relevant to the new school. While the range of abilities and interests of students would be greater, the pursuit of learning to the full extent of their intellect would continue to have the highest priority and be the justification of all our plans and activities.

The task was to contain these elements in the new mix in ways which redefined their relevance and enhanced the levels of achievement of students. It was necessary to re-state the place of scholarship in the school, in terms of the needs of the new enrolment. It was at this point that we had some tension. Some thought that any broadening of the range of subjects offered for students to accept or reject was a threat to the traditional subjects and to the status of scholarship in the school. The basic concept that the school was for students, that it was for teachers to use their skills and experience to meet their educational needs as best they could, was both foreign and threatening to some members of the staff. It is to the credit of most of the staff members, who may have felt compelled to be defensive at first, that they were prepared to help other teachers, by offering them their time to explain what was involved, and to share the experiences they had had as they sought to make sensible, relevant adjustments. Those teachers who did adopt a new stance were also vulnerable to the temptation to have the students fit them rather than to make themselves suit the students. It was difficult for teachers to grasp that we were often considering a need for a group of students who would otherwise not be in the school. The new subject or subjects would only be a part of their work load so that for a half or more of their time, they would be adding to the pool of students who would choose from the existing range of subjects. Of course, until the numbers began to build there was no tangible evidence that this claim was true. And there were other cases where we were adding a subject in straight competition with their own. Of course few wanted the poorer students (as they saw them). That factor in itself was good enough reason for some teachers to object to the trend.

Parents, too, were in a difficult situation. Much harder to contact than students and teachers, many were ready to accept any rumour which seemed to threaten their idea of school for their children. And so we instituted coffee nights which brought 40% of parents into the school in small groups (homogeneous so far as their children's place in the school made them), to ask questions and have them answered. Every one of those 15 or so meetings that we held each year was different, and often the principal and staff could sit on the sidelines while the parents debated a question and offered their insights to other parents.

That we acted upon specific criticisms and gave written replies following investigation of complaints or requests for more information was undoubtedly a factor in building confidence in what was occurring.

Meeting with the committees of the school was onerous, difficult, and necessary at a philosophical as well as practical level. We had to learn the contact points so that communication could begin. In all, the principal attended 140 meetings of adults over two years and wrote much of 50 communications. Mrs. Marjory Masters, a deputy-principal, was instrumental in clarifying and developing numbers of these. Many of these written statements were criticised on the grounds that they were not understood. While, no doubt, the criticism was warranted, the difficulty of writing or speaking to such a varied audience was not without its problems. For larger gatherings we resorted to audio-visuals of various kinds, staff inputs with slides, movie films and to whatever other means we could use. Gradually the message got over—'above all else the school is interested in you and your youngster'—and the rise in goodwill was unmistakable. Acceptance, with negligible complaint, of a common fee, double and triple the amounts found unacceptable in some schools nearby, was one indication of the mounting confidence and goodwill that developed among the members of the school community.

We adopted four ideas which were to turn over many of the practices that were previously taken for granted:

- Motivation and **Success Orientation** for students, use of 'levelling'
- A **Learning Environment** which would give each student security and comfort, self-discipline, and the chance to exercise responsible personal choice
- **Comprehensive Community Education** at several levels
- Institutional and educational liveliness for which '**Celebrations**' would be the visible evidence

Each of these themes are spelled out in some detail in the next five chapters.

What measures were taken to provide a structure in which the new could evolve from the old? All, I believe, were educationally defensible in the context of present and future projections of the school at the time and each priority emerged from a careful sifting of alternatives in an attempt to preserve and even increase the feeling of 'wholeness' in the school, as it was and is described through its aims and objectives (see chapter 3). Much developed out of the way these statements were interpreted.

1. *The school would be a unity—not a school with no common spirit.*

To achieve this objective it was necessary to establish communication paths across the 'river of tennis courts' in the middle of the campus, to bring the staff to a single common room, and to commit the whole school to a number of events and programmes. Thus fortnightly assemblies were instituted. A constructive programme was presented by a section for the whole school and all sorts of achievements were given recognition. The principal made a contribution to each gathering as a symbol of the unity we were seeking.

Next we opened all facilities to all age groups. Students in their free time, and teachers with their classes, were encouraged to use the total resources of the school in appropriate ways. Freedom and responsibility were taught in the context of a single school community. The care programme, homesteads and special events were part of everybody's programme. Some vertical groupings demonstrated the oneness as older students helped younger students, and younger students met older students.

2. *The curriculum content and its presentation would be comprehensive.*

Its comprehensiveness would be based on a number of criteria (it was our job to cater for any needs which could be identified for an economically viable group):

- It would cover vocational, leisure and social objectives.
- It would provide a course suitable for every student for five years, if he or she chose to stay.
- Protected by a minimum of compulsory subjects, students would be able to choose from a range of other subjects (only English, mathematics, science in years 8 to 10 and English in year 11 would be compulsory).
- Students' choices of subjects would determine the staff needs of the school. Subsequent choice of staff would be guided by the attitudes, experience and knowledge the teachers would require to meet the needs of the students.
- All courses undertaken by students would be completely integrated into the master plan of offerings which would be available to every student. It would be a function of each teacher to provide information to students about the subjects they taught.

3. *There would be equality of esteem for all subjects and for all learning.*

By adopting a principle that all learning (and therefore all students) should be regarded with equal esteem, we found we could adopt an open choice principle which students could apply in arranging their courses.

Full protection to future needs could be given. This would be provided in two ways:

- Year 8 courses would all contain the same elements, although the time each student devoted to each part might vary. Year 9 and 10 students would all take English, science and mathematics. Year 11 students would all take English.
- A student who was properly motivated would be permitted to change direction. It may be that his or her performance in a subject of his or her choice was very

poor, or he or she wanted to take up a new subject for some purpose which had arisen after the choice was made. In practice, few wanted to change subjects, but of those who did few gave anybody reason to believe that their request should have been rejected.

There were a number of implications when equality of esteem was given to all subjects:

- Staff elitism was no longer acceptable, especially as it ranged around a hierarchy of academic subjects. Some may have wished to argue that, in reality, mathematics and science still dominate the curriculum. I believe that it is now time to examine their inclusion as compulsory subjects in year 10. During my consultations in other schools, options to omit these subjects have not led to a mass exodus from these subjects nor have counsellors found many cases where they have felt that they should advise the student to include these subjects. In some cases the student returned a year or two later without the reluctance or poor performance that was apparent previously.
- The different needs of various subjects were recognised. Modern languages, crafts, commercial subjects, music, drama, mathematics, humanities, all claimed different ideal time allotments. We discovered that many of the different practices arose out of tradition rather than needs which were specific to a particular subject. Taken from the perspective of the best learning conditions for the students, time variations into 40, 60 and 80 minute periods, with occasional opportunities to use much longer time spaces, successfully introduced a variety of lesson plans and opened up the possibility of a wider range of classroom techniques. The 'god' of 40 minute time slots was truly dented.
- Individuality among students was enhanced along with an equally important opportunity for numbers of common interest groups to develop around each subject area.
- Studies in the field (off campus) gained greater validity.
- Enrichment (Marion's name for short courses which aim to provide starter experiences for possible leisure activities) became more acceptable.
- Teachers came to know more about the problems and work of teachers in other faculties.

4. *Assessment and reporting would be consistent with the other principles we were establishing.*

Because a teacher (or small group of teachers) was concerned with a set of unique groups (subject, year, level, and hence priorities of objectives), in most cases the old mass testing techniques were no longer appropriate.

Thus, each teacher would be expected to assess the work of his or her students (and by implication, his or her own work) by using procedures relevant to his or her objectives and weighted according to the priorities of the level at which he or she was operating. Some of this would be subjective evaluation, but reduction of, say, 'interest' to its behavioural objectives gave valuable guidance to the factors which the teacher should assess (e.g. productivity).

To achieve different weightings for each factor, number values (marks) would be assigned, either as an objective value, or as a relative evaluation on a number scale of suitable dimension.

With success for all students in mind, the mark range for every class at every level should, theoretically, be the same. Achievement of this objective challenged the teacher to make a considerable realignment of the assessment practices which were designed for able students alone.

It was for the senior (leader) in the subject area to give assistance and to moderate teacher expectations. A few teachers soon discovered that the *student could not be fooled into thinking he or she was successful by receiving high marks for what he or she knew was poor quality work*. To the students, success meant that they had achieved meaningful growth toward a clear goal. It was through the challenges and practice of *assessment* that most teachers came to review their approaches and to modify their methods in the classroom.

While there is still room for improvement (our system makes this an imperative—see chapters 26 & 28), it is immediately apparent that many classrooms have adopted non-traditional approaches with good learning performance outcomes and marked increases in motivation and effort.

But these decisions, important and fundamental as each was, could not of themselves bring about more than structural change. To bring our aims to fruition we needed some operational themes or ideas which would change the school in the ways that we thought would advance our overall aims. These initiatives could be introduced because some of the ideas had already influenced the structures we had adopted. They would continue progressively to modify these and other stuctures as they gained depth and influence.

It would be necessary for us to keep in mind that schools are social systems. They may be sick and malfunctioning or alive and well. They are places where people interact with each other and with things. Roles develop which are played out by the members. Alternative activities are suggested which may be sanctioned, rejected, or just allowed to snuff out. Each community shapes its own personal and group patterns of behaviour which may bring censure or reward. Various processes are either strengthened or weakened. None of the new ideas or practices which enter a school can have sufficient significance for it to keep its original form or to be something which can be regarded as permanent.

We needed more than a different fixed model to which we could relate our daily tasks. The school we had in mind would never be static. The staff was one important dimension which would keep changing anyway, and we could have little influence on that fact of life. We had seen how new schools had started, with no tradition to consider, as though what they were establishing would go on for ever, soon to discover how a small change in staff could shake that kind of expectation. While we could fall back on our tradition, this in itself could be a complication and a trap. Had not the school already suffered from the temptation to think that to keep on doing what had once brought honour to the school was all that was needed in the future? We were also aware that, in the community, significant social changes were already in motion without the outcome of any of them being fully predictable. We felt that it was essential that none of us acted with the assumption that our activity would lead us into some comfortable niche or achieve an ultimate level of success or excellence. We had to achieve a balance between the satisfying knowledge that good progress had been made, and the uneasy feeling that more progress ought to be possible. We needed the experience of working for a future which had promise, without expecting the form of things to come to be fixed.

Our purpose was to improve the school. That is, we were aiming to improve the quality of the learning which all students would achieve while they were at school.

It is to be hoped that the chapters which describe the school setting in 1974, and the processes by which changes were wrought, will have enabled the reader to understand the school that we were trying to build. We have noted its ways of functioning and resisting. Unless a school has a momentum to change, as Sarason has pointed out, 'the fate of any single proposal for change will be determined in part by the number of changes that have been proposed, but never implemented'. (1974, p.221) There was danger that suggestions of reform would become an encumbrance unless ideas could be brought forward and translated into action, which would at once bring the promise of new direction and greater effectiveness. We could not risk the reaction 'here we go again—another expert to put us right', or the converse, 'if we hold on it might go away'. New ways of thinking were needed that not only accounted for the failures but also gave rise to new ways of doing things. Otherwise nothing would change but the appearance of change. In order to generate the momentum for change we needed more than a theoretical conclusion that all was not well. Left alone those conclusions at best could be forgotten, and at worst they would hang heavily upon all who were connected with the school. And we needed some good ideas which, converted to action, would change the place, and provide a source of energy for fundamental change. Theory and practice had to work together so that the possibility that the school could improve would itself be an acceptable idea. We would be acting on our best present knowledge, but in the anticipation that new evidence might overthrow what we had done, or give us new insights into how our progress could enter a new phase.

The ideas we needed had to be all-embracing ones, and conjure up a view of a new school more appropriate to its era. They had to sound right, and be right for the present and immediate future. We were engaged in more than a simple 'fix-it' exercise.

The four ideas which we adopted and carefully interwove were to change the face of Marion High School, and influence every aspect of practice. Some readers will have wanted the school to have gone further in some areas than it has done. In some instances the school would agree, yet it would also want to indicate that the adjustments which were made to keep harmony within, and with the world outside, have paid off in greater total development of educational ideas and, more importantly, in benefits for a greater number of students. Tensions and differences of opinion had to be met and resolved in ways which would stimulate growth. Perennial impatience had to be tempered by patience.

The project generated immense interest. For several years the school accommodated 450 to 1000 visitors each year. Many of these people came to criticise, others to judge, and only some came to absorb at close quarters, what was being attempted.

The school certainly suffered under the influence of pessimistic, conservative elements both within and without the education world. Others were disappointed to find that the parts could not always be easily transferred to their own situation, especially when the context in which the sub-programme operated at Marion was very different from that in which they worked. However the process of interaction with visitors from various backgrounds did provide an effective, though informal, continuing evaluation of what we were attempting. Visitors also helped us to articulate our work and to clarify issues. Many staff members benefited from these interludes. Students also became involved and they in turn grew in their ability to interpret the programme to visitors and their peers.

Change is demanding upon professional resources, time and energy but, on balance, the progress shown by students outweighed the costs. For example, half of the new enrolments joined Marion after their secondary career had begun, and often after their schooling had been terminated in another secondary school, only to gain pre-eminence in a special field (e.g. music, dance, food industry). That very few of these transferees gave us trouble is one feature of which we can justly be proud. That almost all gained in self-confidence, and in their learning achievements, must have deep significance. That these people could be absorbed into the original year 8 entry, without conflict, was a special achievement.

Although each theme has a separate chapter devoted to it, the reader must be reminded that none of the four themes that has been introduced in this chapter can be separated from the whole, but that each must be understood alongside other elements and as a part of the whole development. Any one of these measures without the other components is like a vessel emptied of much of its substance. For example, comprehensiveness without an appropriate learning environment or experience of success becomes little more than a shopping list devoid of relevance to the growth of the intellect and spirit of each student.

6

SUCCESS ORIENTATION

We are so accustomed in secondary schools to working with a failure orientation. People (teachers, students, parents, the public at large) find it very hard to think in terms of building success. When a class does well we have been conditioned to feel uncomfortable because our standards are not high enough (or that students have cheated!). If the good performance arises from a special teaching input then we tend to believe that the results are in some way deceptive. If a school does better than the norms suggest, then pressure, cynicism and downright scandalising by colleagues make us keep our success very quiet. Yet delusions of grandeur frequent school newsletters and speech nights probably because of the elated feeling that somehow the capable few beat the failure game.

Too harsh? It is my opinion that no attack upon the failure emphasis in school assessment can be too harsh because of the tragic damage it does to most students. A few years back I was privileged as a scholar of the British Council to visit numbers of the last remaining grammar schools in southern England. There was much to admire in the traditional homage to scholarship. But it seemed to me that the crushing feeling of failure thrust upon half of the students from the upper 20% of the intelligensia of the country was a national tragedy from which many did not recover. Further, and perhaps more tragic, was the dominance of fear in the classroom which stunted the likelihood of the love of literature, history and even science which the very walls of the schools seemed to revere.

'Two kinds of fear are evident in educational institutions. These are fear of being wrong—of failing; and fear of being alone'. The latter provokes fear of failure, producing anxious and compliant individuals. Both fears serve to 'stifle, to a considerable degree, the potential of most individuals'. (Allan, 1973, p.3) 'Fear of being wrong thwarts learning . . . [and] stifles creativity'. (Kerensky & Melby, 1971, p.96)

The tendency to label most children as failures seems to commence early in their school careers. Joy Cullen, University of Canterbury, New Zealand writing for SET—research information for teachers, claimed that school failure may be viewed in two ways:

> *Initial-task failure*—the student's lack of immediate success at a task, an important intermediate phase in problem solving.

> *Normative failure*—when a student's failure is compared with another's success. Initial-task failure leads the individual student to interpret his or her failure and change his or her subsequent actions. But normative failure is marking failure with a public label.
>
> The child's response to failure is determined by his interpretation of the failure—what he thinks caused it and whether he thinks he can cope with the failure. Children who are successful achievers have developed strategies for coping with initial-task failure. Children who are learning failures tend to think of themselves as helpless in a failure situation and give up when a difficulty arises. (Cullen, 1982)

Most teachers have had no personal experience of normative failure, so they may find it hard to identify with the frustration and feeling of helplessness which these children experience almost daily.

The word success might cause difficulties for some people who find it hard to associate a student's success at school with more than 'marks obtained' at the end of a course. There is something of that in the way the word is used here because pragmatism dictates that youngsters' successes and failures will be expressed in some kind of assessment of their attainment of the aims of an exercise or unit. But being successful also involves feeling a degree of satisfaction about what results from the effort that has been expended. Hence, for example, high marks obtained for a soft option, while successful in the sense of gaining high marks, would not give the same satisfaction as the same, or even lower marks, for a more challenging assignment. Inevitably success must be linked with challenge. Hence, in setting the work, the teacher should engage in a process of negotiation with the students and, together, they should design tasks which the students believe they can, *with effort*, complete satisfactorily. One hopes that the process will involve the students in making decisions about a range of choices that have been set before them, and that there will sometimes be an element of adventure in what they undertake.

If we examine our own lives, we recognise that success 'as we go' is one of the strongest components of our motivation to continue with a particular project. We also note that increased complexity, a growing knowledge base, and greater intellectual demands are the elements of a task which draw us on. When the project ceases to challenge us, we are inclined to put it aside. The reasons may be that we perceive the task to be too easy or too hard or no longer relevant.

As we look about us, we notice that the degree of difficulty of the challenges which different people regard as reasonable, varies considerably. While a few like to be challenged by considerable difficulty, and gain their satisfaction from percentage gains toward ultimate mastery, the majority like to master each stage, or at least feel confident that they will be able to cope well in the end.

Incorporated in each challenge is a threat of failure. While we may respond to the story of Robert Bruce as he sat in his cave watching the spider 'try, try and try again', most of us give up after only a few tries unless there is promise of success along the way.

Yet most school systems in the world seem to assume that the majority must fail and that performances will follow or should be made to follow a normal distribution curve. If these assumptions are followed schools 'can do little else except weed out and eliminate the poorer learners while encouraging the better learners to get as much education as possible'. Likewise 'school authorities, examining bodies, teachers, parents and, finally, the students themselves can come to accept it.' (Ryan & Schmidt, 1979, p.19)

Few who experience repeated failure appear willing to become involved again, even when the growth and experience of the years promises success. In fact, people learn about their ability to achieve not from failure, but from success. As Purkey confirms, students build up a backlog of credit from which a good positive self-image of themselves becomes a reality through several avenues:

- from opportunities to make mistakes without penalty
- from positive written and spoken comments
- through extra support and encouragement when the going is tough
- by recognising success in comparison with what was achieved before
- by having their successes praised
- by opportunities engineered to give experience of honest success
- through tasks which appear to the student to be within his abilities ('this is tough but I think you can do it'). (Purkey, 1970, p.56)

In our world, it has become necessary to teach students about the freedoms they can enjoy within the disciplines of proper commitment to achievement. They must also learn to make significant, meaningful choices which can forward their own success records. Unless this kind of climate is established 'self-values are in jeopardy', and the student 'substitutes for his own perceptions, the standards and expectations' applicable to others. (Purkey, 1970, p.54)

We also judge our prospects of success in terms of some kind of standard of achievement. There are two alternatives here. There is the goal that presents us with a challenge which we can accept, or we might be confronted with something which we want to avoid because it threatens us with failure. Tempered by an approach that sets a series of *achieveable* steps along the way toward its ultimate accomplishment, the goal becomes a reasonable challenge which students sense they can meet.

This approach to success leads us to re-define the idea of excellence, giving it two distinct meanings:

> Two aspects of the concept of excellence are of importance for education programmes. The more important is that which encourages all to continue participating . . . to surpass their own previous best efforts and to extend the quality and range of their participation . . . beckon[ing] practitioners forwards, strengthening aspirations towards greater degrees of excellence. This view does not envisage participation only by shrinking numbers of a progressively more skilled few—everyone is capable of progressive development . . . Nevertheless, the concept of excellence implies a continuum in which a few surpass all others. The few constantly establish new levels, new reference points to form, content and technical accomplishments . . . they set standards of effort as well as skill . . . the positive qualities . . . dedication, concentration, a balancing of discipline and spontaneity and above all unrelenting perseverance. (National Report on Education and the Arts, 1977, p.4)

Although the report was discussing 'excellence' in the context of the Arts, I believe it is just as relevant to all of the disciplines. The secondary system, as it has grown through the years, has fallen prey to the temptation to try to make all adolescents fit the mould of the potentially successful academic. Instead of taking them through a gradation of steps, they have been expected to advance so quickly that they have been taken into realms beyond their intellectual capacity. Unfortunately, the more often the students feel inadequate, the more easily they abandon any attempt to succeed. The outcome has been lower, not higher, performances, and a belief, shared by the majority, that they can only be failures unless they take on something inferior.

Young Adults

As students enter their adult years (most operate as young adults away from school from about 14 years of age) two more ingredients can improve their motivation and success. A teacher should

> enable people to feel that they have accomplished something worthwhile . . . something individual . . . [something] they can be proud of . . . [and give them] responsibility: a real self-selected task which enables the pupils to utilise and develop the talents they possess. (Raven, 1977, pp.29-30)

In addition to straight out success, if students discern that they *own* their study, they are more likely to accept bigger challenges and attempt tasks they otherwise would not even envisage. I have become convinced of this by many people's perceptions of themselves as failures. Some have been harmed and led to failure by traditional distinctions between the various subjects in which boys and girls are expected to excel—it has been common for people to expect girls to fail mathematics or woodwork and boys to do poorly in English and cooking. Teacher biases can be transmitted to students in ways that influence their performance. It is only in an atmosphere in which students sense that they can achieve what they believe are worthwhile tasks, that they can feel optimistic about contributing to their future. These considerations will seem unnecessarily idealistic to some, and out of touch with reality to others. 'After all', they will say, 'success or failure is expressed for the students and the teachers in the examination room'. I well remember the importance of the examination results register, during the early days of my teaching career. It was the first record examined by the inspector when he arrived for the annual inspection, and its content was always one of the things referred to early in the inspection. I recall how as a young teacher I had my eyes opened to a new world of 'how to beat the examiner' as a virtue I should cultivate.

John Holt puts the issue clearly.

> When I was in my last year at school, we seniors stayed around an extra week to cram for college boards. Our ancient history teacher told us, on the basis of long experience, that we would do well to prepare ourselves to write for twenty minutes on each of a list of fifteen topics that he gave us . . . When the boards came, we found that his list comfortably covered every one of the eight questions we were

> asked. So we got credit for knowing a great deal about ancient history, which we did not . . . that then, and for many years afterwards, I disliked history and thought it pointless and a waste of time. (Holt, 1969, p.149)

Holt admits regretfully that he played the same game as a teacher. He concludes however with a different and, in the long term, wiser and more responsible view:

> In short, our 'Tell-'em-and-test-'em' way of teaching, leaves most students increasingly confused, aware that their academic success rests on shaky foundations, and convinced that school is mainly a place where you follow meaningless procedure to get meaningless answers to meaningless questions. (Holt, 1969, p.151)

Examination pass or not, it does seem to be wicked and a waste to make a student hate a subject and dislike school in return for an examination pass. My thinking about education began on a day when I had three inspectors operating on my trio of concurrent classes and one of them, A.W. Jones, who later became Director General of Education in South Australia, asked me afterwards what I thought it was that enabled every youngster to pass the external examinations year after year. I didn't have any idea. I think I thought most teachers had the same success. I know now that some of the manoeuvres I made were more to 'beat the examiner' than to 'enhance the quality of learning'. At that time I made the same mistake as many are making today. I looked for the answer in my interpretation of syllabuses and my classroom management. I came to realise that a teacher who expects kids to succeed at challenging, attainable goals, and does the things that build up a love of the subject for its own sake, gives more to education in real lasting terms.

At depth, this is the essence of the issue. We all know about the classical scholar-cum-teacher, who loved his subject, dearly wanted his students to share in that love, and whose influence has lived on in spite of the ignominy of poor examination results. This comment is not included to suggest that there are not good teachers whose influence lives on and whose students perform well in examinations. However, it does suggest that in an hierarchy of influences, long-standing, positive and desirable influences can be outweighed either by the negative effect of fear of failure or by being students who are more influenced by the more conventional criteria of a successful school career (i.e. marks) than by genuine knowledge and love of the content of their courses.

Older People Influence Youth

Students commonly bounce their evaluation of themselves off their parents, friends and teachers. Sometimes, by a single stroke, somebody with influence upon a young person, can destroy, affirm or restore the youngster's motivation to accept a new challenge. Usually the main influences are in the school. 'Children who are expected by their teachers (and parents) to gain intellectually in fact do show greater intellectual gains . . . than do children of whom such gains are not expected'. (Brookover and Erikson, 1967, p.110)

As an essential element of effective pedagogy, intellectual growth should be anticipated in every student. Each school should recognize the upward jumps in intellect as they occur. It should respond by having arrangements that are visible to the students and provide them with the kind of stimulus for which they are ready. Marion's attempt to answer this exigency is set out in the next chapter (Levelling).

Self-Esteem and Personal Dignity

When we shake these considerations about students' success experiences down to their barest bones, we discover the basic need of everyone is personal dignity and self-esteem.

> Many [students] find the educational scene so filled with failure, so full of reminders of their limitations, and so harsh in giving these reminders that they hate school. (Jersild, 1952, p.100)

School becomes the place where the pain of being seen as a failure may become intolerable. Thus the basic reason for attending school at all is defeated at the source.

> The failing adolescent comes to secondary school with an impoverished self-image and an ego-structure undermined by failure.
>
> Rejection by the school—a major organ of society—means that in a very important area, one is unloved, and one's human value is denied. (Wall, 1977, pp.170 and 172)

Moreover, the basic drive towards independence becomes the dominant motive of anti-school behaviour—at best, disinclination towards learning; at worst, it manifests itself in disruptive and anti-social traits. On the other hand, 'if a child, no matter what his background, can succeed in school, he has an excellent chance for success in life'. (Glasser, 1969, p.9)

Thus it becomes fundamental that the atmosphere of the classroom is success-oriented. The challenges, the warmth, the comfortable relationships, the controls and the organisation must all be directed toward the reality of student success.

> Unless we can provide schools where children, through a reasonable use of their capacities, can succeed, we will do little to solve the major problems of . . . [a] country. (Glasser, 1969, p.9)

Marion discovered the value of learning as much as possible from the previous school about the personal history of its new intake, so that arrangements (groupings) could be made from the outset to ensure that the students would be able to study at the level they had already reached, and build up, from that point, a successful secondary school career. It was essential to act in ways which contrived to maintain the possibility of self-actualisation for all students as long as they chose to stay at school.

When a student is denied the opportunity to proceed confidently, his progress must be impaired. As Professor C. N. Power (School of Education, Flinders

University, South Australia) observed in an article about the learning needs of early adolescents, and equally applicable to students throughout their secondary years and *beyond,*

> most of the learning difficulties and frustrations (he or she has) observed . . . have to do with discontinuities in the curriculum, the underestimation of the experience and capacity for rational thinking on the one hand, and the failure to provide appropriate examples, enough practice and experience in developing concepts and skills on the other. (Power, 1984)

Whatever we do, and it is likely to include some compromises, the essence of the argument is in its advocacy of conditions which lead the learners to make notable steps forward in their ability to use a skill, to own a body of knowledge, or to appreciate their intellectual ability to engage in analysis and synthesis of data. The evidence *against* 'tackling the impossible' as a kind of virtue, is overwhelmingly positive. If we are to create a sound learning environment for all of the students, their own approach must be conditioned by the knowledge that they can anticipate a satisfactory outcome. It is inexcusable that schools and teacher training institutions all round the world perpetuate the points of weakness to which Power refers.

The way teachers relate the learning opportunities they create for their students to the students' capacity to engage in active learning experiences at a level they can cope with must outweigh other factors such as assessment and accreditation, subject choice, personality and relationships, socio-economic background, or even future employment options. However, when the challenges are reasonable ones, any problems that the students may encounter in other areas have a better chance of being overcome.

Beginnings of Success Orientation

While the present structure of Marion High School has most of the structural characteristics we set up in 1974 and 1975, since that time we have endeavoured consistently to refine the procedures and to increase the efficacy of the learning. The organisation of the learning programme arose out of a pragmatic attempt to form a structure which could replace streaming. The existing alternatives which locked students into layers from which they could not escape only reinforced the state of affairs where the majority failed to reach the heights accessible to the select elite. The claims for the structure advocated in this book are based upon the advantages of offering challenging and attainable experiences to students and upon the evidence that intellectual growth follows. The outcome may be measured by the public examination successes that came at the end of students' school careers, especially when their results are considered alonside the retention level of the school, the various case studies (see chapter 29) and the examples of student work interleaved in this book.

What became known as parallelling and later as levelling began as my empirical response as a young teacher to an instinct to want to help youngsters pass their public examinations. At my first school, although my students were far from being select and able, they were remarkably successful at getting passes with hardly a failure recorded over several years. But I was painfully aware of my shortcomings as a teacher, and of the difficulties some of my students were experiencing. I worried about how I might get all the students through the examination *and* have more of the best students gaining credits. I began to experiment with special challenges for the better students, especially in mathematics, and I did observe some success. I tried to find ways of challenging my best chemistry students with some practical problems, but the lift was more in enthusiasm than in examination results.

At my next school I taught agricultural science without any formal background. I worked in a kind of co-operative with the two Leaving (year 11) examination students, who obtained the top two places in the State awarded to agricultural science candidates. I feel sure that I learned more agriculture during the year than they did, yet the methods of investigation we used must have been useful to them as well.

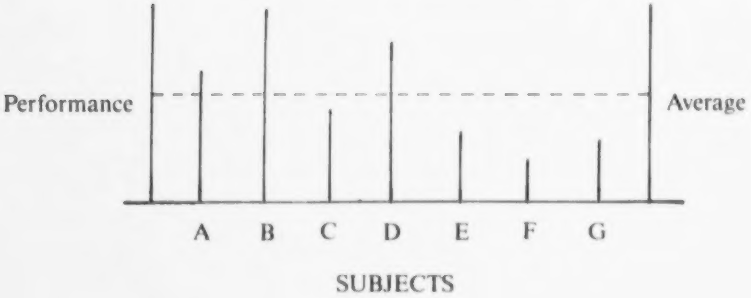
A few years later, during my first appointment as head of a small country high school, I arranged to divide the new entrants into three approximately equal groups and one class to be made up of the slower learners because I had observed in previous years that teachers tended to neglect the bottom minority in each of the mixed ability classes we had formed each year. At first, the move was not popular with their parents, but the youngsters did respond to the closer attention they obtained from their teachers, and from the absence of the 'bright' youngsters from their activities. Under parental pressure we 'promoted' the best performers to the other classes (all followed the same subject pattern). In their setting, the youngsters were a slow but lovable group, who won the hearts of their teachers, but apart from the extra love and attention, little else appeared to change. Some staff members claimed that that year's students were a 'better bunch'. They may have been right, but the battery of tests we were required to give first year students, in those days, suggested that they were a weaker not stronger group. Thus the evidence favoured the new arrangement.

My next school had a tradition of 'repeat classes' in every year. I was impressed by the frustrations and the resentment the repeat students felt and the fact that overall they demonstrated only marginal improvement in performance in return for an extra year. The examination records showed that it was likely that their results would be poorer the second time round in their previous best and worst subjects. A small research exercise in that school also demonstrated the folly of streaming i.e. promotion and classification into classes based upon the average mark which was calculated to one or two decimal places at the end of each term, on the basis of a term mark (one third) and examination mark (two thirds) in each subject. Few students had a scatter of marks anywhere near their average. The example shown on the graph was much more typical.

The reasons were probably many and complex, but that was of little importance compared with the fact. But these differences should not have been unexpected by the teachers who should have been more careful about making unfair harsh judgments when one of their students had a lower rating than in another subject.

Figure 3.

Typical Range of Performances



That same school had accepted the new idea of an alternative year 11 course for year 10 failures, and I noted that the self-esteem, enthusiasm and effort of most of the students in that course was in stark contrast and markedly better than the class of repeats who had a similar record of examination failures at the end of the previous year.

It seemed to me that any future plan had to take account of the student's strengths, provide a genuine alternative to traditional academic work, and allot importance to each student's self-concept. During this period I had the privilege to be accepted for a course about 'action research' set up by Mr D. Anders who was a secondary school inspector at that time. While I was still doubtful about the accuracy of my observations, my confidence was mounting.

In 1967 I had the opportunity to visit a number of high schools in New South Wales, and see the Wyndham Scheme during its early formative months. I recognised parallels between some of their approaches and my efforts for my students. One strong impression related to the way the least able were motivated by their grasp of the basic skills at a simple core level, and I realised that I had tended to confine my expectations of my slower students to this level. When, many years later, I floated this explanation of the successes of my slower students among my colleagues, few were willing to agree, and most were quick to refute it. Many tended to look for some local factor to provide the reason.

While I had been attracted to many aspects of the Wyndham Scheme, my concern was that students who succeeded after a time at a lower level, were locked in, and could not advance to a higher level. The 'scheme' promised them promotion, but New South Wales' schools were loth to move them because they had already been proved 'dumb' and because they would not be able to catch up the higher level work that they had missed. How important were the 'missed' sections? Would it be worthwhile to make a compromise with broad content, so that upward movement was possible? I was not able, at first, to convince my own staff that the successful students should be promoted, but we did adopt a single syllabus outline.

I became head of a new school which included among its students many with backgrounds and performance records which did not encourage any hope of academic merit. Yet, mostly recent migrants from the United Kingdom, they were a very engaging, likeable group, anxious to make their way in a new country. At this time I was fortunate to be able to visit a number of schools in the United States of America and in England. I was able to compare the products of schools in America with those from each of the school types operating in England at that time—the grammar schools and the modern schools. On my return, I was ready to take whatever risks were involved in establishing a school which reflected my experiences. Two principles had emerged:

- Students of similar age, at any one time, have different potentials for intellectual achievement.
- In terms of learning, students can successfully undertake more demanding tasks as they grow older. They can cope not only with greater complexity, but also with the intellectual requirements of a task. Student growth is indicated characteristically by an increasing ability to cope with abstract, theoretical situations.

When these two principles were applied to our situation, at least one of our previous assumptions was wrong. As students moved through school, it was not fair or reasonable to judge their potential by the capacity they demonstrated at the time of entry. Hence it was improper to lock students into courses at any stage, and certainly not at the beginning of year 8 on the basis of a battery of intelligence and achievement tests and their achievement records. Even worse, the verbal nature and the cultural implications (they handicapped students with other than Anglo-Saxon middle-class backgrounds) of the intelligence tests we were required to use were likely to give a very wrong impression of the competence of some students.

We could extrapolate from this observation that, while the Wyndham Scheme in New South Wales gave the student immediate relief from failure, it also withheld the attractive reward of entering a study level which both the student and his or her parents believed to be important to his or her future. Hence the initial motivation through success was often followed by the frustration of not having access to higher study.

In response to parental pressure and through a lingering cynicism, many New South Wales' schools were offering 'standard' and 'credit' level study to more students than could immediately succeed at each level. I suspected that the failure of the bottom group of students at each level was often an outcome of their earlier failure, and its subsequent reinforcement by teachers and peers. In my view, these schools were defeating the main thrust of the Wyndham Report, but understandably so, if it was assumed that students could be drafted in the lower years, and that none of the students, drafted down, could qualify for higher study later in their school career, except through the socially unacceptable route of having to repeat a year. After many more years and visits to many schools in many countries, I have come to believe that these practices are still the most damning followed by schools. The problem cannot be overcome by the option of mixed-ability grouping, except in the unlikely case of a teacher having either a very small class or the skill to manage a class of normal size so that every individual counts. Yet the advocates in Australia of the so-called democratic curriculum would pursue a system of mixed-ability classes from which the quiet and fringe students are lost to the demands of the noisier or more attractive members of the group on which the teachers tend to focus their energy and attention. The single most difficult task for teachers of senior classes is how to work with students with a wide range of abilities without neglecting any one of them. Certainly a levelled class will have a range of student performances within it but the differences will not be intellectual. Hence the teacher's approach can be appropriate for the whole class without the danger of implying to some students that they are inferior in the one area in which they cannot respond successfully. This matter is among the issues given special consideration in the next chapter.

My observations in America led me to recall another conclusion which I had formed in my first country appointment as head, where most of the students already had their future secured, irrespective of the outcome of their school career. I had found that motivation at school had a good deal to do with the student's relationship with the school, its teachers, and with successful achievements in each subject. It seemed to me that these factors outweighed pressure to get a certificate, or to perform for a job even in places where a future job was tied to winning a certificate.

These conclusions fitted with another action research project in which I had established that most students perceived their school achievements and their estimate of themselves in terms of their lowest scores, when they would have been wiser to be building their careers upon their strengths.

Parallelling (Levelling)

I therefore proposed a structure of 'parallelling' for my school. The division of students in *each* subject into three levels was based upon their performance in year eight, where all students at that time undertook the same studies and the same tests. The middle group who had a good chance to pass the Intermediate examination (each subject taken separately) were placed in the standard class—the best performers were put into the advanced class—and the poorest into the basic class. The staff were urged to adjust their teaching and testing, so that the mean performance for their class was between 65 and 70%. Those who did very well (over 85% over the year) were to be promoted to a higher level. To enable this to happen, the programme had to remain the same for all classes, but the teacher was expected to interpret the material to suit the class.

This arrangement seems to be crude today, but the outcome soon showed that students, now succeeding, qualified in numbers to move to a higher level, and few qualified to be placed in a lower level class. There was considerable evidence of greater productivity, better behaviour, more response in class and a more positive view of school. There was a tendency for students to describe their performance at school in terms of their strengths. Paradoxically, one outcome was better performance in their weaker subjects. Using the public examinations as the control, and making any adjustments by comparing the school's year 8 entrance battery results with State norms, the school's performance was significantly better, in spite of abnormally high retention levels.

* * *

SUCCESS

Success. Does it come automatically or by luck? I should say that neither is correct. Success is one thing every human strives for but it is evident that it only comes by hard work. This I can confidently say, as without any effort or sacrifice a person will not succeed.

I have been educated in a convent school in Penang, Malaysia, since preparatory until high school. During my school life I have faced many challenging situations. I was a member of the Science and Mathematics Society and a librarian during my senior Cambridge examination year. During that year, 1981, there was a Mathematics and Science competition held at State level and many students were encouraged to participate. I was rather keen on a project I had in mind in Biology, but when I asked my teacher if it would be successful (since I was rather inexperienced regarding the matter) she told me that it was an impossible project as my experiment needed special equipment to produce infra-red light for seed germination. As the equipment can only be obtained at the University I had to improvise my own device. I had to go through the trouble of obtaining special permission to do my research in the University Library as my school library was rather inequipped. After many weeks of hard work and patience I succeeded in completing my project. To my surprise, and above all, to the astonishment of my teachers, I obtained the first prize at State level for my project which was entitled "Phytochrome and seed germination".

This success was an incentive for me to proceed with my ambitions in life. However, there are various activities that I had also participated in just last year before coming here. I was the Secretary of the Ranger Company in my high school where I studied lower six, having succeeded in my senior Cambridge exam. I was also a school warden and a member of the Editorial Board where I was elected Treasurer. All these and various activities have helped me to discover myself, my capabilities as well as my weaknesses. As for me these activities had one way or another enabled me to grow to be an independent person because there are times when I am faced with decisions. I had learnt how to approach and solve problems as they came and above all, to face reality.

School based activities is a very good motivation for students as it brings students of the same age group and interest together. Here we are able to share our thoughts, and as for the Asians we can distinguish the silent competition where one will try his or her best to outbet the other, though on the surface they seem to be of helpful character. I am saying this through experience, as wherever we go you can never find an Asian who is not keen on competition with another fellow Asian. Everyone has brought along this competitive attitude with them, even to this foreign land, Australia.

One disadvantage of these activities is that some students, especially those in the committee, tend to be doing most of the work, as other members have the attitude that why should they work when they are not elected. Again some students participate for name sake and not for the sake of enjoying a certain activity. Obviously the competitive character is the cause of this.

As for my own experience I have also learnt a lot from the Christian Fellowship Group in my former school where I came to a realisation that no matter what denomination a Christian can come from we have a basic belief in the One True God, and that we should never be afraid to discuss religion with another fellow Christian from another denomination, though there might be some differences.

Before I end, I am rather thankful for an opportunity to be able to write this essay as it has brought back memories of my past successes and this has somehow lifted me to continue to strive to attain my ultimate goal in life, though the situation may seem to be an impossible one. Yes, I am not giving up my ambition even if God only has given me one talent because, if I use my given talent to the fullest, my Creator in all His mercy will shower me with His extra talents. For everything that is IMPOSSIBLE to man is always possible with God. I will continue to trust God that He will always help me now and even in my tertiary education and right through life, in all my activities, knowing that before one can face a world of challenges, he or she has to undergo the many trying activities in school.

. . . Linda G. Peterson
Year 12

PERSEVERANCE . . .

BMX Fever

There's a craze that's hit South Australia
that's sweeping through the land,
like a raging forest fire that a
Northerly has fanned.
So Fathers, grab your cheque book
And Mothers take a Bex,
If your kids have discovered the joys of BMX

They'll need a padded jersey and a pair of padded pants
and they'll have to wear a pair of gloves
To protect their little hands
All riders must wear helmets
To save their little necks.
For they may come a cropper
Off their BMX.

They won't care if they are losers, as
long as they can ride.
And coming in behind the field
won't even dent their pride.
One day they'll win a trophy,
that's what they expect.
In the meantime they'll have loads
of fun, on their BMX.

There's a lot of different jargon
you'll have to get used to
Like 'bunny hop' and 'table top'
and 'berm' and 'whoop-de-doo'.
But this part's not only for the boys
With muscles there to flex,
You ought to see the powder
puffs, race their BMX.

It's a thrill to see the riders in
their colours bold and bright
and the organizers see that
everyone is riding right.
The accent is on safety
each bike must pass all the checks
We don't want any accidents to
Spoil the BMX.

It's a family based enjoyment
riders range from 4 to 40.
If you're worried about your
kids, or think that they are naughty,
Join a club, and they won't get in strife
with booze or drugs or sex,
For all they think or talk about
is their brand new BMX.

... Chris Louch
Year 10

EXCELLENCE FROM ERICA . . . .

Making A Cheeseboard

First I got a piece of wood. I measured it. Mr. McColl sliced the wood. Then I started sanding the wooden pieces. Some pieces are brown, some are white. I put the pieces on the board and glued them down. I waited for it to dry. I sanded the top of the board to get it even. I oiled the wood and I sanded it again. The oil went into the wood. Ms. Shaw cut the edges of the board. I sanded the edges and then oiled them. The board is in Miss Jolly's office.

Erica Stacey
Year 9

REWARDS

We could go on forever almost
with

successes in Mathematics competitions
in the Oliphant Awards
winning the Secondary Schools Energy Plaque
Awards in Sport and Photography at the
Royal Show

BUT

as we go to press for this limited edition

our successes in the
University of New South Wales
Australian Schools
Science Competition

are uppermost in our minds.

Girls and Boys have done very well indeed.

Watch out for the results of the participation
in the solar energy competition . . .

FRUITS
"BY THEIR 'RESULTS' SHALL YE KNOW THEM"

DISCOVERY

I have successes every day at school.

I love learning about the world; about our surroundings; about the mechanism by which nature works and produces.

Discovery adds something new to your life and the knowledge that every day is going to be different helps me to break the monotony of life and face the future with more confidence.

. . . Raffaele Sannino
Year 12

7

LEVELLING

The concept of levelling is probably the most important used by Marion to enable students to capitalise upon their talents. Levelling holds the key to the school's success. A wider curriculum and an encouraging environment have certainly contributed, but without levelling and the approaches it has made possible, all the other developments would have had a much smaller impact.

The same or similar opportunities may be offered through sensitive individual progression, but given the constraints of a school, the device of levelling frees the classroom of the things which restrict the processes from which the mass of students derive their motivation and drive to learn.

> They [the students] grow at different rates; as they grow, . . . special abilities and interests grow . . . , [but] it is one of the curiosities of our profession that neither of these facts has been unknown, down the years to a 'Mother of seven' or the teacher of experience . . . yet . . . we have ignored these significant facts . . . in basing our organisation and programmes of work, upon . . . judgements made about pupils at a relatively early age by consigning them to courses, streams, and sometimes schools, from which they can change only with great difficulty. (Wyndham Report, 1957, p.87)

I recall that the Wyndham Report was put into practice very quickly and that, quite predictably, the teachers turned their energy to the syllabus content. A system of streamed classes was set up to take examinations at different levels without concern for the pedagogy which would stimulate learning across the board. What happened should not have been unexpected. The streams took on the labels of the levels, and each level of a subject was allotted a different content so that the movement the committee envisaged became difficult, if not impossible in practice. Thus a grand opportunity was lost.

Upward Mobility

In my report to my staff at my former school, after a visit to New South Wales in 1967, I anticipated that the aims of the report could not be achieved unless they included in their plan an arrangement by which students could *move up as soon as* they had demonstrated that they were ready to tackle intellectually more challenging work. It was necessary to organise the school in a way which would encourage students to use present success as a springboard to new, more demanding study.

As early as 1908 Binet suggested that intellectual growth continues throughout what are now the secondary school years and beyond. Intelligence has what he called 'the characteristic of the threshold variable', from which small developments in intelligence sometimes open extensive new horizons. 'The instruction should always be according to the natural evolution of the child and not precede it by a year or two . . . In other words, a child should be taught only what he is sufficiently mature to understand: all precocious instruction is lost time'. (Binet & Simon, 1973, p.20)

Justification

While extrapolation from the work of people who have unravelled the chemistry and mechanisms of the human brain has dangers, through its remoteness from the realities of the classroom, where a group of individuals are brought together to form 'the class', I do believe we gain some clues about the direction teaching must take. If the reader concludes that the explanations are strained, but agrees to consider the principles which emerge, then I am just as happy. I have come to be convinced of the value of these principles as much by the circumstantial evidence of children's growth patterns as by specific scientific data.

We gave the credit to Piaget. If this is too kind, or misplaced, then let it be a convenient focus upon the evidence of numbers of workers who have contributed to our knowledge of how, and in what conditions, young people learn.

Growth is not steady, but proceeds by jumps and differentially among alternative disciplines. Whatever the reasons, the rate of progress is unlikely to be completely predictable, as special abilities show marked development and tend, if they are not restricted by some external influence, to determine the overall success profile of the student.

Thus the idea of levels was created in which the differences would lie in *the way* the topic was treated. The content would have to be *the same* in broad terms *at all levels* so that a student at one level could move up to the next. The levels would cater for the intellectual capacity of the students at the time and *high achievement* at one level would be regarded as an indicator that the student was ready to tackle more complex and intellectually demanding work.

Whatever the mix which determines the outcome, 'the obstinacy of individual differences and the relative stability of the general cognitive level means that education in the second decade must take a realistic view of what can be achieved'. (Wall, 1977, p.71) When the students arrive at secondary school, most have mastered what Piaget calls 'concrete operational thinking'.

> He can reason adequately and logically about the facts of the physical world, manipulate concrete concepts in thought and in language, understand reversibilities and constancies and can handle propositions of an 'as if' kind embodied in a concrete form . . . [But] *too rapid a transition from concrete to abstraction may cause maladjustment* [my emphasis]. (Wall, p.72)

The Piagetan stages of cognitive development theory is but one contribution to an understanding of intellectual growth. However, it does help us to make sense of the basic problem of students who simply give up the battle to master what is presented by good teachers, in good schools, in stimulating environments. Social and other factors certainly cloud any attempt to isolate one area or another, but the basic notion of intellectual growth provides a framework which can be success-oriented without condescension or assumptions about permanent incapacity to undertake intellectually demanding tasks.

A genuinely comprehensive system is more than a range of subjects from which the students can choose. It also seeks to fit each child's intellectual capacity and to reconcile the personal and social needs of the child in a form which plays down comparative judgements, in an endeavour to make the best of all students irrespective of their interests, abilities and styles. The structure and atmosphere of the school are also arranged on the understanding that if the students are not challenged sufficiently, or if their sheer intellectual power is limited for any reason, they will be moved into a group which is appropriate to them. Numbers of educators have examined Piaget's work, and have endeavoured to elucidate the implications of his findings for the school scene. It seems to me that in focusing attention upon the students, four very important principles, pertinent to levelling as a practice to be followed by schools, emerge as a direct outcome from the Piagetian and related literature.

- Piaget emphasises that mental capacity (intelligence) grows as each person moves through the adolescent years. Many students, in Piaget's terms, think at the concrete operational stage, and move by degrees to the formal operational stage, and to formal abstraction.
- This process requires of students that they be active (operational) in their interaction with the material.
- The process is not different in essence for any of the subject disciplines. Piaget dismisses any suggestion of subject elitism.
- Students are most interested in that which is moderately novel (i.e. neither too familiar or easy, nor too remote or difficult) and provides challenges for which they have a cognitive experience to build upon.

Let us take up the last principle first and so develop a description of a practice which encompasses all four principles. There is a sense in which the children are the architects of their own mental activity. For example, supporters of schemes which re-cycle (re-teach) topics over a sequence of years, claim that the only elements of the first presentation which will affect students are those with which they can cope. They may be learning, but not what the teacher had hoped. On a later occasion of re-teaching they may find new stimuli and, maybe, accommodate those things which were intended by the syllabus.

Let us take an example. A class may be moving toward a concept about 'burning chemical elements in the air'. At the concrete stage, the students relate only to the examples they have before them. If they are given wrong materials or equipment, say dirty spoons upon which to heat an element, they will not relate the fact of an unusual outcome (to the teacher) with their specific experiences with other examples.

Later, they will extend their experiences to a consideration of further possibilities. Word statements may substitute for, or be placed alongside concrete experiences, but in a sense, the words are also concrete, and the thinking relates to the actual experiences. Out of these experiences their static knowledge builds up.

Still later, the children may ask questions and seek answers which are more indicative of the formal stage of reasoning, and a generalisation might become the basis for new operations. The interesting implication is that the bright people do not have their bigger knowledge only through experience, but because they can accommodate many examples and generate more examples out of their formal operative ability.

Through this example we can identify three levels of mental activity in a classroom, and see how students pass from the concrete level, through transition, to the formal level. (If the same material is repeated year after year novelty may be lost and motivation may flag). The table is useful because it shows how the same group of students (those in year 8 and progressing year by year to year 12) changes in intellectual composition as it progresses through the years. This also underlines the error of assuming that students have formal capacity too soon or in too large a proportion.

Table 1

A Sydney sample quoted by McNally

N.S.W. Class	S.A. Year	Concrete	Formal
Grade 6	7	95.5 (0.5% still intuitive)	4
Form 2	9	77	23
Form 4	11	43	57

(McNally, 1975, p.54)

McNally found it useful to interpose a transition stage between Piaget's concrete and formal stages of mental growth. When a group of bright year 7 students (IQ > 125) were exposed freely to and allowed to handle the items of a display of materials about Indonesia, 22% asked questions which sought specific knowledge; indicating that their 'reasoning' capacity was in transition between the concrete and formal stages. Only 37% of these able children could reason at the formal level while 41% were at the concrete level. (McNally, 1975, pp.125 - 6).

On evidence of this kind, we put students into groups and, by matching the educational strategies with stages of mental growth, we attempted to provide the conditions which would replace the negative attitudes in the classroom and staffroom with a more bouyant success-oriented atmosphere.

At Marion we have called them levels:

basic (concrete)
standard (transition)
advanced (formal)

We gave distinctive meaning to each level by giving different priorities to a list of possible goals.

Let us assume five common objectives:

- gaining students' *interest* in the material
- learning the *skills* needed to deal with the material
- developing a body of *knowledge* about the material
- including some demonstrable *reasoning patterns* as knowledge
- developing *generalisations* and an ability, through mastery of the ideas, to handle theoretical principles in ways needed to reason, to solve problems, and to create new relationships and expectations.

The *basic level* emphasises interest and practical skills, expects minimal gains in knowledge, ability to carry out simple scientific processes, and reasoning patterns which are simple and have been introduced as skills. No attention is given to generalisations.

Standard level gives attention to the first four objectives, but does not expect theoretical mastery. The students have acquired more than basic skills. They have gained knowledge and understanding, involving the use of theoretical principles.

Advanced level students need little time to learn necessary skills, and develop knowledge and reasoning patterns in order to form generalisations which they apply to new situations. They can cope with theoretical principles at greater depth, master more complex ideas and skills, and they have learned to handle abstract concepts.

If creativity or problem-solving were added to the list of objectives, the approach to basic and standard level students would be experimental and experiential (trial and error), while advanced level students would be expected to formulate theoretical conclusions and test them. Hans Furth makes a distinction between knowledge at the standard and advanced levels. He contrasts 'low operative figurative knowing' with 'involved high operative knowing', where knowledge is given significance by the learner in relation to the operation (situation) to which it relates. (Furth, 1970, p.150)

Because the process of growth is continuous, the classification may grow to say five levels to gain extra stimulus.

basic
    modified
standard
    credit
advanced

Thus students currently at the *modified level* will be in transition between the expectations of basic and standard levels. The skills of basic level are used in more complex situations and students are expected to recall a framework of knowledge of the material dealt with.

Students at *credit level* undertake more complex tasks than those currently at standard level and they are ready to tackle more intricate relationships.

The five levels are in sequence so that outstanding success at one level becomes an indicator that the child has developed the intellectual capacity needed to cope with the next stage, and as an immediate consequence, should be 'promoted' to it (see chapter 23). It is essential that movement to higher levels is practised at frequent intervals *throughout* the year, not only at the end of a year. It is useful to tie movement to achievement. Students are motivated because, by performing well, they are rewarded by a new level of challenge. However, in the meantime, they have success experiences where they are. The slogan 'get up if you can, otherwise you are better where you are' has, educationally, a practical meaning. In either eventuality, the flow of good attitudes, which follow success, is unimpaired.

An interesting outcome is that, following promotion, students have 'fully arrived' at the next level. They do not move up from the bottom, but fit into the group. Relative performances depend on other factors (e.g. industry, appeal of the topic, state of health).

In general, we discovered that students were most comfortable and were most ready to become active participants when they worked with students of approximately similar ability, i.e. at their own level. This observation is confirmed by the results of Moreno's sociometric test (cited in McNally, 1975, p.126) which consists of asking children to write down the names of the students they would prefer to be with under certain circumstances, in this case the students they would like to work with, as members of a small group, for discussion or practical work. It was therefore interesting to note how students who reject a group of higher level students early in the year may want to join them a few months later. Transition from one level to the next will not be sought until the students feel, through their successes, that they 'belong' to the higher level. Levelling does not make for absolute homogeneity, and *it is not desirable that it should.* (We have found that, in the few cases when this observation does not seem to apply, the reason is usually found in the presentation and inadequately thought out expectations of the teacher, rather than in the children's perception of 'where they are at)'.

Our experience showed us that there are some students who have ability to operate at high intelligence levels so long as they are able to work in a concrete context. This sort of 'concrete intelligence' may be missed if the students are required to work only in the abstact world of words and are not given any opportunity to express their ideas through modelling, art or dramatic forms. In practical terms, these students are seriously handicapped by systems that relate intellectual ability solely to performances in the worlds of books, writing and numbers.

Subject Performances

While some subjects may be awarded higher status, there is no intellectual basis for choosing subjects from one discipline ahead of any other. The range of intellectual challenges can be applied to any subject. When a student is less successful in what happens to be a status subject, unfortunate estimates of personal worth may follow. But the reasons for the distinctions are mainly historical and blend with traditional biases. Out of the 'grammar' school tradition, the subjects they taught have developed expectations which are associated with the upper levels of intelligence, while subjects like the crafts have been limited to the concrete levels. Yet there is no justification of this distinction—a student can be presented with the material of any subject at his own level. The tendency among the general public to assume a high or low level, according to the subject discipline, is unfortunate for the child, and misleading for those who give it significance.

Equally false is the practice among schools by which groups of subjects are packaged together and, worse, are given status according to the subjects which have been included. The school should have a policy of open access to subjects, and teach and assess each subject at the level which the students' ability and performances in that subject area have indicated. General sorts of tests, with concrete, factual and formal requirements, are not helpful. While it may be argued that standard examinations should include this mixture, it is certain that the same approach in the classroom will not be in the best interests of the students.

Some critics have suggested that the school has a responsibility to channel students into courses. This is not so and I suspect that the real motive of this practice is seldom concern for the students.

Success, challenge and upward mobility bring confidence to the students and give parents sufficient evidence for them to accept the profile of their youngsters' records and be pleased by the outcome. It has been rare for parents to 'demand' a higher level for their children, and we were also spared the conflicts that arise because a set course omits some subjects of special interest to different individuals.

In Holland I discovered four kinds of secondary school operating alongside one another. The junior general secondary school represented the third level with a clientele whose ability and expectations approximated to the modified level at Marion High. Students were expected to show that they had effectively used the appropriate skills to deal with the material at hand with only a limited build up of essential knowledge. Yet the subjects they studied corresponded with those studied in higher level schools and the programmes were similar. It was expected that, in four years, a student might reach the same outcome as students one level higher could reach in three of their four years. In practice, some students (10 - 20% of those directed to level three) achieved the performance level needed to qualify for level two. Once in the school, given a little time to settle (a social barrier), they fitted into the mainstream of the level two classes as though they had been at level two throughout—evidence of their intellectual growth. The motivation came from success. Confidence and growth made it proper for the student to rise to higher intellectual challenge. It seemed tragic that the pride and satisfaction the level three school had in having their students move upwards was not always reflected by the school to which they moved, yet, in spite of the need to change schools and the attitudes of some staff, the youngsters' performances fully justified the arrangement. (It was commonly yet wrongly assumed that the students who moved to a higher level school had been placed in the wrong school at the beginning.)

Once we had embarked on levelling it became clear that there were implications for the methods teachers employed, the way time was used, and assessment and reporting procedures. Better methods in the classroom led on to considerations about independent learning and how it could be supported. To blend these factors with the content of the courses and social components of the best possible learning environment also made it necessary to make drastic changes to the organisation of the school. Their practical importance has led to a separate chapter for each aspect, but they must always be seen in an interrelationship with each other, and as various elements of an extension of the 'success' concept and its basic expression through 'levelling'.

However, it is useful to summarise here how, with the refinements of the years, levelling has contributed directly to the success experiences of students.

Advantages of Levelling

1 The main motivating element arises out of success experiences students have at their studies. For the least able, relief from constant failure and recognition of their growing strengths clearly brings happiness and renewed effort. Students come to appreciate that 'failure' can be something from which they can extricate themselves. Each set-back becomes a part of a learning process because the hurdles (reasonable challenges) are not beyond their 'failure tolerance'. Some observers may suggest the success is an example of the Hawthorne Effect and that the impact will soon wane, but after more than a decade of positive responses this objection can safely be discounted.

2 A student who achieves a higher level in one year maintains this progress into later years. When this does not seem to be so, the reason lies with the teachers who prematurely advanced students in order to manipulate class size or who had created an impression of achievement through high marks for work which lacked appropriate challenge. Hence it pays handsomely to give careful attention to the task of identifying '*readiness*' for higher intellectual challenge.

3 Students who qualify to take the higher level in only one subject are just as likely to succeed in that subject as those who qualified across the board. This fact may not seem logical, but its reality also places the practice of promotion by average performance, or similarly, by aggregate marks or points, outside the evidence. The idea of a hybrid course emerged quite early and it was soon adopted. This still appears

as a paradox. However, it probably reflects human capacity to develop particular interests without necessarily growing in other areas.

4 By introducing alternative methods of study which have a practical, skill and concrete context, the students currently working at the basic level gain in confidence, work harder, behave better and perform better. But the real winners are the large middle group. That 'a student is better to be down if he cannot rise' is as well accepted as the opportunity to rise through high performance. The cynics are always ready to claim that some students stay down because it is more comfortable— implying a desire for an easy road. While they may be correct in some cases, I am convinced that the reason for any reluctance students may show for not wanting to move to a higher level is more likely to be a 'fear of failure', after many earlier experiences of failure, challenges poorly negotiated by teachers, or the fear that they will receive destructive criticism from their teachers should they over-reach themselves.

5 Levelling opens the way for students to change direction, transfer into the school, or re-enter after a period away from school. This process has ramifications for the future when senior students may be allowed to choose not only their subjects, but also the levels at which they will study them.

6 There are advantages which flow to teachers from levelling. By this arrangement the teacher can have a more homogeneous group, which will be easier to manage. The loss of the best students to a higher level does not change the outcome, and in fact the departure of a leading student one day means that a replacement emerges the next day—evidence of steady intellectual growth of all of the students. Mixed-ability classes are always difficult for teachers to manage. We discovered that, by attaching the levels to the students, teachers were made aware of the differences, and the students had an incentive to strive for a higher level. The topic is important enough to warrant a whole chapter (Independent Learning—chapter 16).

Operational Controls

Organisational norms will help to maintain and enhance standards.

1 Only 10% of the year 8 intake (this will be higher in some districts and lower in others) operate at the advanced level. However this proportion steadily increases to enable over 40% (compared with State norm of 27%) of the student intake to approach the matriculation examination by year 12.

2 A decision to assess exclusively with marks, either absolute or on a scale, helps, because each exercise can be weighted according to the demand it places upon the students at their particular level e.g. an exercise which requires several hours' work, or a test based upon a large section, can receive more marks than a trivial exercise. The assumptions that students at every level will be kept very busy, and can pass if they

try, suggests that each level should operate with an overall 65% or higher average mark for the class, with a range above 50%. While a control of this kind, pushed too far, can lead to an unhealthy, mechanistic view of students, it can also be used as an indicator that the criteria of levelling are being applied appropriately. Any significant departure merits careful examination by the senior and the teacher.

3 All teachers should be required to teach a range of years and levels. By this device a more professional approach emerges, and the quality of discussion is lifted. The emphasis is upon 'difference' rather than 'soft option', and the practice of promoting students to higher levels, when they perform well enough, maintains a challenge for professional efficiency.

4 Levelling is not setting (eg. same expectation, without regard to ability). Every class is oriented towards success for every student in every class in every subject. The degree of self-fulfilment of prophecies of failure is less in evidence in a lower levelled (basic) class than in the bottom classes of a set. It is significant that under levelling, substantial upward movement does occur.

5 All levels follow the same syllabus outline at the same rate. The tendency to proceed too slowly through the content with lower level classes is avoided and learning can occur at the optimum rate for all of the groups. (For many teachers, the adjustment away from fixed upper-ability norms can only be achieved with the help of senior supervising staff.)

Some Early Problems

1 It would be misleading to claim that any change comes easily. Many teachers had to make considerable changes to their habitual attitudes and perceptions. For example, it was hard for some to praise a youngster at basic level in a subject for good work of a practical nature without a derogatory postscript, or to give a good mark for what they see as a 'low standard' effort because it lacks intellectual or academic quality. Some teachers never lose their 'academic' arrogance. They like to 'play god', choose winners and tell the others (majority) that they are not good enough. Rules which give students the right to study at a particular level are needed, so that their performance profiles cannot be put aside at the whim of a teacher.

When all seems well, there will be some who simply adopt the framework, but make little attempt to make any real change to their pedagogy. A few teachers do have serious philosophic problems about keeping non-academic youngsters at school, but the priorities given to the objectives of each level do encourage them to make adjustments, and present and assess material in ways consistent with the level of each of their classes.

The status given by the public to academic merit was, and still is, often a handicap hard to cope with. The external impact of rewards can stimulate learning, and give momentum to intellectual development, but it can also counter progress in areas toward which there are less obvious rewards. Perhaps it is for these reasons that some teachers in some disciplines (e.g. crafts and performing arts) have difficulty expecting (even accepting) work with academic merit from their most able students. Some of those in lower level classes still talk seriously about being 'the dummies'. It can usually be traced to a teacher's attitude and comment, a parent's comment, or difficulty with the work (traditional methods and interpretation of content) to the point of failure.

2 At first, groups of senior students who are not able to tackle the year 12 external examinations may be small and uneconomical. It is hard for some people in the education world to accept that less able students have a right to be taught, but those who persist on their behalf will be pointing the way to the future.

3 At first we deferred to parents' wishes to have all students begin year 8 as though they already had the intellectual capacity to work at credit or advanced level. This meant that most students experienced failure before they were placed in a class which operated as a level at which they could succeed. Later we levelled students on entry to year 8 on the advice of their primary school teachers, so that all experienced immediate success and many were rewarded by movement upward into higher intellectual levels early in their secondary careers.

Conclusions

Levelling provides for students, when they are ready, to work at a higher intellectual level without any penalty accruing from their previous performances. The structure of levelling generates the expectation, and provides the key, which makes growth and success into realities. At best, teachers are influencing students to think positively about the outcomes of their studies, with the benefit of an arrangement which places them within the context of reasonable prospects of satisfactory conclusions for their efforts.

> Motivation is not outside the learning process.
>
> Intelligence grows from 'within', while 'learning' is a different matter—it usually depends on reward or some outside reason . . . The task is one of furthering and nourishing the growth (of intelligence) by providing suitable opportunities. (Spolin, 1973, pp. 28 and 74)

Hence a school should recognise steady growth of intelligence and not regard it as subject to fluctuations in performance. Yet what is accomplished provides the basis for intellectual growth and the motivation for further learning. The two are inseparably interwoven and the traditional system of completely passive transfer of content must stifle motivation, learning and intellectual growth.

Levelling generates considerable use of 'activity' techniques, including field studies, which improve the effectiveness of learning. It also enables teachers to get closer to their students. Both are vital components of effective learning and student success.

> When the school has sorted out its learning priorities, assessed where students are, and systematically gone about the task of creating well organised structures of knowledge . . . intellectual development proceeds smoothly for the majority. (Power, 1984, p.6)

In assessing the strengths of the arguments in this chapter, it is necessary for the reader to think in terms of the majority. Elsewhere in this book, the claims of minority groups and the need to give special support to individual students at times, are dealt with at length. In this chapter we have been setting the 'best' basic and practical structure for the majority within the parameters of the resources schools have available.

* * *

UNEXPECTED . . . .

Von Braun, he was a much developed man
He made a missile with a complex plan

Helen Keller was a famous lady
Although blind and mute, she lived bravely

Nightingale was a most helpful lady
She went to help the unfortunate bravely

Christine Edwards

Copernicus kept his notes till he was dead.
Then allowed the minds of men to be fed

Darwin said we had a monkey uncle
Which made my ego flatten and crumble

Helen Keller was deaf, dumb and blind
But should be an example to the whole of mankind

. . . Elizabeth Dickinson

The moon and stars shone before his eyes
They showed to him the science of the skies.

In outer space there was a mystery
Till Galileo's telescope did see
The moon and planets shine before his eyes
They showed to him the science of the skies.

. . . Belinda Paterson

Pythagoras discovered triangles
People get mixed up with his angles.

Von Braun was a German scientist
He guided rockets that rarely missed.

Though she had three difficulties
Within herself she learnt many abilities.

. . . Tunde Juhasz

The Theory of Relativity
Was found by Einstein. Clever wasn't he?

. . . Barbara Bayly

Against all odds and costs she persevered
Madame Curie will always be revered.

. . . Vida Wardhana

Mendel was a monk who sowed some beans
And through mutants he discovered genes.

. . . Craig Beenham

Helen Keller was a famous lady
Who with her teacher fought with bravery.

The lady with the lamp; Miss Nightingale,
She helped the wounded without any fail.

Why are students' minds in a tangle
'cause of Pythagoras and his triangle.

. . . Vanessa Kennedy

Copernicus
From the church his knowledge he hid,
After his death, his notes "lifted the lid".

. . . Carolyn McLean

As a baby Helen was normal and cute
They then discovered she was blind and mute

Miss Nightingale, the lady with the lamp
Healed sick people in a hospital camp

Louis Pasteur killed off the bacteria
And this affected our interior

Sharon Magor

From Year 9 Advanced English

FLOATING

The balloon floats through the air
A feather quivers by
Soon the dust will settle
And the clouds will lower
The smoke will start to clear
And the fumes will disappear
As nightfall comes

Graeme Cederblad
Year 11

About the author:
My name is Graeme Cederblad. I am fifteen years of age and I will be sixteen soon. My hobbies are collecting and making model cars and trucks.

About two years ago, I was walking in the hills and I slipped off a cliff. I grabbed on to some little bushes and slowly pulled myself up the cliff to safety.

(This quality of work was the result of individual help through the Lalor Learning Centre.)

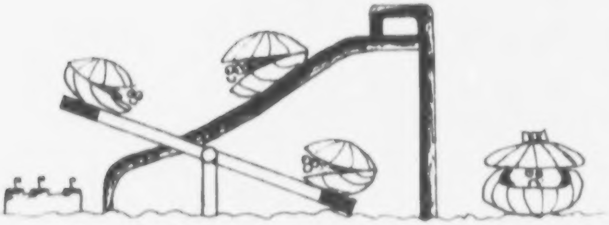
TICKLES—THE LONELY OYSTER

Tickles was a very lonely oyster. None of the other little oysters wanted to play with her. She was always giggling and laughing in the silliest way.

Even when Tickles was sad she couldn't stop laughing because she always felt like she was being tickled. That was how she got her name — Tickles.

One bright and sunny day in the sea, (the sea is where oysters live), all of the young oysters were playing at the Neptune Park Playground. Up and down went the see-saws, higher and higher went the swings, and down the slippery dip the little oysters scurried.

Everyone was having fun — except Tickles! Her very loud, silly giggling and laughing annoyed the other oysters so much that they took no notice of poor Tickles, who was really miserable.



Feeling very sad, Tickles went to see Grandpa Oyster, the wisest oyster in the sea, and asked why the other oysters wouldn't play with her.

"That answer was very easy," Grandpa Oyster replied, "My dear because you laugh so loudly".

Tickles laughed, but she was still sad. How could she stop herself laughing and giggling?

She tried everything!

But nothing worked.

That night Tickles went to bed feeling very, very, very sad. Of course she couldn't sleep, so in the morning she got out of bed and went outside.

The scallops, crabs and fish were all awake and swimming around.

Tickles was outside watching them when she suddenly realized that she wasn't laughing. She ran as fast as she could to the playground where all the other oysters were playing.

"I'm not laughing, I'm not laughing", she yelled, and as she did, can you guess what happened?

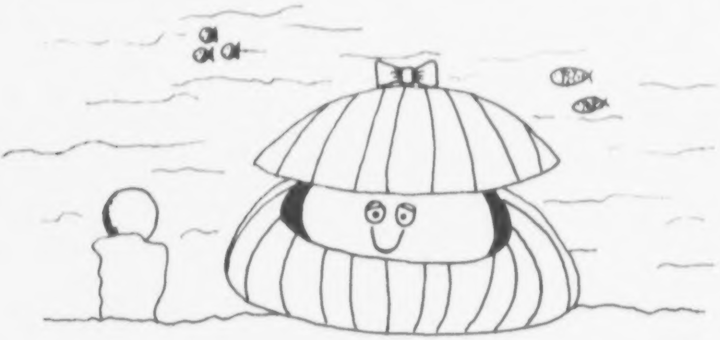
A beautiful white, shiny pearl had fallen out of her mouth!

It was the sand that had built up in her shell that tickled her, but now that the sand had been made into a pearl it didn't tickle any more.

The other oysters admired Tickles' pearl and then asked her if she would like to play in the park with them.

"Of course", said Tickles, and went on the swings, the slippery dip and the see-saws for the whole of the day.

Everyone was having a lot of fun, but Tickles was the happiest oyster of all.



Bradley Just
Year 9

LEVELLING

Last year when I started off in Maths I was
involved with a class that was noisy and had
no respect for the teacher.

I must admit I was noisy too
and never did my homework.

When my class had a test, I
failed along with my neighbour.

We were put down.

I ended up in the second-
to-lowest class.

I then said to my neighbour,
"Fred, let's concentrate
and hopefully we will get
out of this class.

At the end of the year, when
we had the review test, I
got 93% and was put into
Credit level for 1983.

George Konidis
Year 9

8

AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LEARNING

I have had trouble finding a suitable title for this chapter, which takes up the second major theme that has led Marion High School into considerable modifications. It is about the relationships students have with people in their school, and about the feelings they must have, if they are to feel motivated to learn. So it is about success experiences, but it is more than that. I had thought to head the chapter Motivation and Self-discipline, but success also motivates and encourages self-discipline. The topic is elusive because we are inclined to want to put down the favourable characteristics of a school in objective terms which relate to buildings, structures, subjects and methods. But these things are as nothing if the student lacks the desire to learn.

John Holt begins his book *How Children Fail* with a simple devastating sentence,

> Most children in school fail.

and they do , because they are not inclined to use whatever talents they have.

> They fail because they are afraid, bored and confused . . . afraid, above all else of failing, of disappointing or displeasing the many anxious adults around them . . . bored because the things they are given . . . are so dull . . . Confused because most of the torrent of words that pours over them in school makes little or no sense. (Holt, 1969, p.1)

In short, Holt believes that schools fail to give children the feeling that they are embarked on a worthy pursuit.

Harsh and possibly unfair to some, but in its caricature it reminds us of the temporal aspect of school. At least a large part of what students do about learning depends on how they feel about it at the time. Without a sense of well-being about the environment as they see it, students will behave in unacceptable ways when they are asked to inquire, gather knowledge, or solve a problem—they will not learn. Nor will a desire to learn be created if the emphasis does no more than surround the students with the things of which they readily approve.

> The key problem [is] the separation of pastoral and academic matters—you cannot guide students unless you get to know them really well by teaching them.

> We need to look for ways of placing the pastoral system at the centre of the learning system of the school, without destroying the excitements and opportunities of specialisation. (Watts, 1977, p.37)

Such a relationship does not deny the teacher a positive, creative and dynamic role in a child's learning, but it does leave room for the student to be a participant within a comfortable, inviting, supportive atmosphere. It also allows others to intrude and it leaves the student feeling that the sources of his learning are not confined to the classroom and the instruction of the teacher.

Schools and teachers try to stifle disruption by students in various ways:

- Use of rules, often differentially applied.
- Segregation of students into classes (and even schools).
- Differential treatment in such matters as discipline, giving marks, and awarding symbols of status. (Owens & Steinoff, 1976, p.28)

The tensions these controls create tend to compromise a school's image. They give sufficient reason in themselves for the school to cultivate, deliberately, the kind of relationships which enable co-operation and participation to produce the cohesiveness that arises when students accept the way the school does things.

But the matter does not stop there. The students' attitudes to the school are also fashioned outside its fences. Students vary in their response to environments and it is not possible to make sweeping statements which apply to all or even nearly all students, but factors outside the school, such as socio-economic background, family stability, prospects beyond school, peer pressures and sensitivity to their previous school experiences in junior primary, primary and previous secondary schools, all have their effects.

The fears which arise out of the uncertainties of a changing world colour parental perceptions. The world appears to many of them to be performing poorly. The demands upon them are often contradictory, and they are often placed upon people who already feel extremely frustrated by the lack of control they seem to have over what can happen to their children, inside, outside and beyond school. The school cannot escape its share of the blame for this, and it cannot operate as though all is well, or by apportioning the blame for the difficulties it faces to external forces. Public pressure to make every student an academic has persuaded many teachers to commit their greatest sin. They have surrendered to influences which want them to create blind conformity to traditional academia, and, in so doing, they have increased the chance of apathy or deliberately disruptive behaviour among their students.

In a sense every child is a member of a minority group. An exaggerated view it may be, but it is a good point at which to start because it leads us to look at children as special people who have a right to be given individual consideration.

Power (Flinders University, South Australia), found in a series of case studies in 1981, that 'social alienates saw themselves being rejected by the teacher and the peer group—and they became social isolates (who) tended to be picked on by others'. They were non-learners in the making.

In a study of a school he calls 'Purdah', Power (1984) concludes, among other things, that Purdah benefited whenever it became a more humane place and whenever it was made a more comfortable and caring place to be in. Yet the question lingers as to whether pastoralism, the central educative role of pastoral care, might confirm and compound the acceptance of human limitations and of depressing social realities. While Marion was keen to respond to minorities, it soon rejected the idea of alternative courses, because it saw this construct as one which re-inforced social separation. We came to emphasise that any strategy designed to be a corrective must have 'normality' as one of its goals. The norm extended to the learning environment, and made other aspects relate to it.

For example, a boy came to Marion from a special kind of school for those students whose parents set great store by individuality and personal choice. I asked him how he felt about the outcomes of some of his choices, and the freedoms he had enjoyed. His reply surprised me. Much embarrassed, he said, 'Well, look at me. I'm soft and protected, and I'm frightened'. His previous school had re-inforced his freedom and protected it, but the lad was sufficiently aware to be afraid of the 'normal' world, and to be critical that his school had not led him out there. He did very well, but not until he had some traumatic rubs against other people's 'rights'. He wanted to experience the disciplines of living and learning, and of having to stay at it, even when it was uncomfortable.

A programme we had for some very disruptive youngsters in 1976 - 1979, (see chapter 19), foundered when the project leaders decided not to reward 'reformed behaviour' with the chance to return to 'normal' schooling. Like patients in a hospital, students must not continue to be 'treated' once they have been cured. In fact it is best if they never lose touch with the world of the normal school. Margaret Batten's findings from her Australian Council for Educational Research study of an Australia-wide sample of fourteen year old secondary students, *Perceptions of the Quality of School Life* (1982) fills out this conclusion:

> From student interviews and discussion it was possible to identify the critical factors in the school environment that led to positive experiences for students in the four domains of schooling.
>
> In the *status domain*, the most critical area for determining the quality of school life concerned experiences that bolstered students' feelings of personal importance; allied to this were the areas of student responsibilities and rights. The growth of students' self-confidence was most evident in those schools that showed concern for all students rather than just for the high achievers.
>
> The two aspects of the socialization process that contributed most to student experiences in the *identity domain* were the friendliness and acceptance of other students and the acquisition of self-knowledge . . . With regard to the other aspect of identity, the quality of school life was enhanced in schools where students were encouraged by teachers to develop their self-awareness and were conscious of the process and its importance.

> In the area of *personal development* students experienced adventure in learning in schools where student initiative and involvement were encouraged . . .
>
> *Opportunity* was the other domain of schooling in the learning acquisition area; the fairness of teachers, the value of learning, and the ability to cope with school work were the factors that were most influential. (Quoted by ACER Newsletter, April, 1982, p3).

Care and Support

Many teachers care about students succeeding academically but fail to take account of the fact that they may not be able to carry out abstract theoretical tasks successfully. No amount of urging and encouragement will bring success. This kind of 'caring' has a completely negative effect and may seem callous to the poor achiever. These students soon come to see themselves as helpless failures. Their self-esteem reaches a low ebb. Even the tasks which they could have done will no longer be achieved. If insensitive teachers pursue them with criticism they will ensure permanent failure. Unfortunately our schools contain scores of students in this category—it forms the seed-bed of misbehaviour, and unwillingness to learn. Teachers carry a heavy responsibility for a student's achievement at school. Their 'expectancies about (their) own capabilities in a specific subject are very often a function of teacher evaluations'. (Hurt, Scott and McCroskey, 1979, p.170) Yet teachers frequently reject students who have a 'somewhat high ability, but have negative attitudes towards school'. (Silberman, 1971, p.197) In so doing teachers promote low achievement and defend it by attributing degrading, often contradictory, tendencies to the students without cause. The teachers claim that they are 'restless, likely to cheat, uncomfortable in the classroom, sassy or defiant, lazy, likely to interrupt . . . daydream, unimaginative, fight, depressive, unhappy, immature, impulsive'. (Silberman, 1971, p.154) Sometimes all of these traits at once when few of them may be true of the children.

Students need teachers who care for them as human beings and who are prepared to encourage and support any serious effort. One implication here is that, once students' esteem is down and poor behaviour traits have developed, it takes considerable patience, forbearance, perseverance and skill for teachers to create the conditions which reverse the trend on a permanent basis. But the number of students who have been hurt is large enough for teachers to seek out, in themselves, the qualities which will help to save them. For example, teachers might risk trust and reward, knowing that they like to feel trusted and respond favourably to tokens of encouragement and recognition whenever they come their way. Of course, a fraction of the teachers is not the only group culpable for pressing the idea that traditional theoretical study is superior to other learning. The community contains large influential sections who also insist that the academic alone is sufficient. Others have different views which are just as difficult for the caring teacher. The number of students from unstable homes is increasing and unemployment creates a feeling among numbers of students that the kind of qualification offered by schools is not worth the effort. Other students come from homes which do not share the values that society approves.

Teachers might feel constrained to try to modify unreasonable demands. However, there is some cause for pessimism, if one takes this hope too far beyond their immediate sphere of influence. Yet, the school can ease the situation if, where necessary, it makes students more aware of the pluralistic nature of society. By recognising differences and changes which do exist in the society around the school, and without departing from its objectives as an institution which promotes learning, it can try to accommodate them within its boundaries. The conservative will see such recognition of differences and change as contributors to falling standards, while the progressive elements in schools might want all the students to reflect their own values. The inescapable truth is that if students feel uncomfortable about their surroundings and the vibrations of the relationships about them, they will not learn so well. Happy children learn more and have teachers who are concerned for, and attached to them.

Student Participation

While teachers must be undisputed managers of their classes, the students can, in all sorts of ways, participate in what happens in and around the classroom. Where students feel part of the proceedings more learning occurs, and will continue to occur, as they put joint ideas into practice and together solve problems that may arise.

Teachers should, in real ways, always encourage students to help with the physical attractiveness and tidiness of their quarters, and to make suggestions about reasonable work loads, work rules and rewards, the evaluation of accomplishments and all other matters pertinent to their learning. In accepting these prescriptions, teachers do not forfeit responsibility, or accountability, for the attractiveness of the room, students' care of resources, a rigorous pace, smooth and efficient conditions for work and high standards of expectation and achievement. Note, too, that teachers who do not have appropriately high and improving performances in their classes do not, in reality, have high expectations. The students soon identify the real expectations of their teachers. They are perceptive and recognize very quickly when teachers pay lip service to their responsibilities, and, while they may take advantage of the situation, they recognise and reject the double standards.

Secondary School Culture

Many students, especially upper school students, resent some aspects of the kind of behavioural expectations common to western secondary schools. It appears that teachers use control techniques which have evolved from those devised for children of younger age groups. In recent years some schools have made token changes for year 12 students (e.g. change in dress), but the basic relationships have remained unaltered. The main objection is to what students call 'mindless regimentation'. Others take objection to what they regard as 'old fashioned values' such as wearing a tie, or standing before they greet a teacher. Yet there seems no reason why teachers cannot modify their expectations so that, across the school, there is a continuum of behaviours which are consistent with the best relationships, growing up and taking on increasing responsibility, albeit with the inconsistencies of adolescence.

Learning

But one cannot separate considerations of this kind from the learning programme. The union of these broad aspects into a single programme can only occur if there is suitable organisation and procedures which are conducive to ready identification with, and co-operative participation in, the variety of opportunities and experiences which have been arranged.

While the great variety in the backgrounds of the students implies a wide range of things that are expected of a school, it is in the interest of each student to participate as fully as possible in a wide scope of activities, and for teachers to be sensitive to small differences in the patterns of behaviour and lifestyles of the various socio-economic and ethnic groups that constitute the school community.

The great challenge is not in providing the alternatives but in convincing the students (and hence also their parents and the whole community) that they will benefit most if they wholeheartedly join a school community which has a common spirit as well as a capacity to accommodate differences. If we can achieve this difficult aim, then the school becomes a disciplined body of people. There are several factors which contribute.

First and most important, the school (its staff and council) must have respect for all students, their parents, and their cultures. In the same way, a teacher's self-esteem and much of the satisfaction to be derived from the job depend upon the respect received from the local school community. A teacher increases the chance of achieving mutual respect by showing a willingness to listen to people and to learn about their concerns, hopes and aspirations. Respect for the school will follow. In this atmosphere students will reflect, in their approach to learning, the love of knowledge, skills and concepts which teachers have. A care programme is the second ingredient a school must have if it aims to gain confidence in the student community. When there is respect between people, there is a basis for concern for each other. In our society, when so much prominence is given, through the media, to selfish living and personal gain, it becomes essential that the school should give an opportunity to students to experience concern for other people. This element requires more than teaching a subject well, because teachers must share the concerns of students for matters outside the confines of the mastery of a syllabus, and teach them the meaning and implications of mutual care.

Moreover, while teachers should not be required to bear an unwarranted proportion of the community's burdens, it is in their interest to take more time than they might be accustomed to spending in explaining their objectives to parents, in a language parents can understand, patiently building an atmosphere in which easy two-way communication can take place.

Good community relations are encouraged when the curriculum includes frequent opportunities for students to work in the field. Through study trips and study camps, students can experience the pleasure of learning about the world around them while they come to know their peers and teachers to an extent not possible on campus.

Within reasonable limits, opportunities to learn a number of skills, which arise incidentally, should be taken up. For example, the simple aim of having students participate in the maintenance and development of their surroundings provides the context for children to learn a wide range of skills not normally found in school courses. Our tendency to want to confine learning to the contents of carefully designed packages, while valuable and even essential to some degree, should not prevent us making optimum use of the learning opportunities which can occur informally. (An activities co-ordinator, an ex-electrician with diverse skills and a proven interest in, and ability with, young people, was employed *by Marion* in 1979 to introduce an area of competency perceived to be missing, or unavailable, among the teachers who wanted to undertake projects in which practical skills were needed).

The requirements uncovered by any needs assessment cannot be met out of set syllabuses unless they are enhanced by opportunities for students to plan and work at projects of their own design. Bridging exercises may be available where children, alone or in small groups, plan to work at a topic in an across-the-subjects way. In an healthy disciplined atmosphere opportunities can be given to students to work at projects in their own time, with minimal supervision, but with the full range of school resources, including teachers, available to them.

Another important facet is found in the root meaning of the word 'discipline'. Discipline can be defined as 'a significant learning experience'. We talk of the various subject fields as 'disciplines'. The word also refers to the various standards of conduct which members of a group are expected to meet. Therefore, it is capacity for self-control, for consideration of the rights of others and for creating an inner peace with one's environment.

> The underlying principle of all true discipline is liberty, because liberty must come from within. (Longmore, 1929, p.79)

In this statement, Lydia Longmore, the 'mother' of infant schools in South Australia, was not advocating licence.

> Liberty does not mean that we remove all restrictions, but all unnecessary restrictions. When we try to remove some restrictions we often find how really unnecessary they were. [How true!] (Longmore, 1917, p.27)

But, persistent interrupters need punishment, as they must know the consequence of wrong-doing. Consideration for others is basic. However, long lists of silly rules must be replaced by common-sense responsibility and space made for attainable freedom —liberty. The repression of the old days should be replaced by avenues to success and personal fulfilment. Students need challenges which can be attained and they need to *feel* growth. Disciplined work-patterns contribute to both.

> Right use of liberty is a preparation for the larger liberty . . . joyous movement and happy life. We need more joy . . . joy is the sign that (children) are developing normally. (Longmore, 1917, p.27)

Rigid conformity is demanded today for office, factory and the football team; the machine demands it. But people are human beings with feelings and their spirits should be allowed to burn brightly and be warm towards others. In no place is this more important than the school. And may I venture to suggest, also the office, factory and football team.

So what is needed is a balance; for the sake of order, hygiene, tidiness and considerate manners, there must be routine and restraint, but there must also be a place for all individuals to be active in the community and enjoy warm relationships, be motivated, ready to ask questions and find pleasure in their school work. Whatever external discipline there is must encourage self-discipline which is a giant step towards the kind of self-education for which teachers, other experts, books and equipment are employed as aids.

> How can a child educate himself? When a child comes to school he has already acquired an amount of knowledge of the world around him and of the language of the people in that world. How did he acquire this? By actual contact with things, by being keenly interested in things around him, by investigation, by doing and by asking questions. He usually ceases to ask questions when he comes to school—the teacher asks them . . . We know that in our class methods we are constantly holding back the smart boy [or girl]—the class pace has to be made to suit the average boy. The smart boy thus waiting frequently becomes the troublesome boy. In the . . . [new] . . . school the smart child goes ahead and creates his own pace. (Longmore, 1917, p.17)
>
> Likewise the slow children rebel unless their difficulties are addressed.

Almost seventy years later that statement has a modern ring about it. While maturity is not a function of age, teachers should work with the assumption that, given room for personal development, students *will* grow in maturity and become more self-disciplined, as they move through the school.

Hidden Curriculum

One difficult area of relationships, and self-actualisation for students, lies within the 'hidden curriculum', that complex of things learned by students at school which do not come within the scope of subjects and syllabuses, yet are inevitably present in any institution, including schools. A song that was popular in England in 1980 included the lines:

> We don't need no education.
> We don't need no thought control.
> No dark sarcasm in the classroom.
> Teachers leave them kids alone?
> Alive? (Cohen, 1983, p.86)

The quotation highlights one of our most serious problems. Illich saw the hidden curriculum as a vehicle through which class values are re-inforced. Some students would be 'hewers of wood, and drawers of water', while others were 'born to be professionals, bosses, leaders'.

> By taking this tack, the schools have been a major force for conservatism at a time when everything else in the culture screams for rapid reorientation and change. (Postman, cited in Cohen, 1983, p.87)

When parents brought their unhappy, rejected kids from the private schools, or from certain of our high schools, for enrolment, they were often torn between the obvious joy of their child at having the opportunity to find rewards at school, and the shame they felt about their child 'mixing with', as they saw it, 'the lower classes'. They asked about what they could do, even then, to recover 'the damage of their failure as parents'. Of course the children were not unaware of the attitudes of their parents, and some were less successful because joy in learning had been purchased at the price of parental disapproval. There were a few who found a culture in which academic activity was acceptable, and they did recover 'status', but this could not be the outcome for most of the transferees because they had neither the interest, nor the intellectual capacity, for that kind of success. The school nearly always succeeded in creating the conditions in which these students became happy, industrious learners, but we were seldom 'thanked for it', because the outcome was not true to the expectations of their social class.

I was told about a prominent university in U.S.A. which admitted students from working-class background, with lower performance levels than those from more favoured homes. They argued, and many years experience supported their view, that the students from poorer homes had lacked the support for their studies that others enjoyed, and, given equal opportunity, they would rise above the others. In my view, many employers lose valuable employees because they lack the wisdom of that university.

At Marion we tried, by providing facilities in which to do 'homework', to be a substitute home for those who could not have a helpful environment at home, because it seemed to us that 'homework' is an upper class institution. The library became a 'place to work' and 150 students commonly used the opportunity each day. It was also 'a resource' which provided not only its special service, but also the kind of back up that a child gets from a home able to support study—old magazines, scissors and paste, a quiet bit of help with a skill, or the meaning of a word or a sentence and so on. The learning centre concept (see chapter 15) followed as a natural development. Breakfast was also available because significant numbers of students would otherwise be without food until well into the day.

More recently I was able to observe the results of similar services in some of the depressed towns and cities in England, and to see the evidence of a tremendous lift in the performances of the students. What was called '11th session' was the chance for students to return to school voluntarily at night to take an additional subject or, far more significantly, to work in a favourable environment and have tutors available on request.

Many 'poor children' are held down by the chance remarks and expectations of children and adults (including teachers) from more affluent homes. Sex-roles are stereotyped by some and, in recent years, attention has been drawn to text books which have a specific racial, political or social bias.

The problem is to distinguish those practices which are educationally acceptable from those that would be labelled indoctrination. The emphasis given by Marion to rewards, friendliness and caring attitudes were certainly designed to 'manipulate' students into undertaking more learning. But it seems that bias is unavoidable, and that the closer teachers get to students, the greater the chance will be that they will be influenced by their teachers' behaviour. We wanted Marion to be liberal, yet some take the view that we were being indoctrinatory. Both views

> seem to value the autonomy of the student, and to favour the idea that he should learn to think critically and to think for himself: both accept that there may be a difference between what the teacher does, and what he intends to do: and both seem to agree that the sign that indoctrinatory processes have taken place, is the emergence of students conforming to a single ideological position. (Cohen, 1983, p.89)

Marion came to be proud of the degree of tolerance which developed between races and students of steeply different socio-economic and cultural background.

> The criticisms . . . seem to be based on the claim that students emerge, who favour the *wrong* ideology. (Cohen, 1983, p.89)

There were parents who were very afraid that their children would take a radical view of the political or moral preferences of their homes and there were some employers who wanted conformists who did not think for themselves—those people wanted young people to be indoctrinated in particular ways. Federal government policy in Australia appears to be ambivalent in this regard. While there is pressure on government schools to be accommodating, ever increasing proportions of the education cake are being transferred to schools which have a single 'philosophy' that emphasises some kind of 'indoctrination', be it religious, humanist or secular. In fact, much of the condemnation of government schools stems from ideological bias of class, and moral or academic tradition.

Pateman in *Language, Truth and Politics* (1980, p.39), wants teachers to be self-consciously biased in favour of telling truths—an ideal which is easier in the stating than in the practice. But there is a difference between, on the one hand, raising alternatives and helping students to develop their own view, and, on the other, of presenting an alternative which is proclaimed as 'truth'. Our pluralistic society will leave the government school to keep alternatives in tension while other schools can be safely left to propagate their own variety of truth, probably because they are likely to be traditional, conservative or small in numbers. But the two segments of the system are being driven apart, and the government schools are being allotted to the low status and thankless task of risking progressive innovations in the face of social change and against a tide of decreasing real support.

I have vivid memories of occasions when equally alarmed parents fought out their opposing views at a gathering of parents, in response to my pluralistic and liberal view of the school's position about controversial issues. In fact, I was to conclude that students could receive more help, at the point of their readiness, from teachers who, in caring situations, were willing to understand the impact of different cultural pressures than from deliberately contrived consideration of controversial areas such as sex-education. There are some issues which are better not 'packaged into courses'. Of course that did not please all teachers, or prevent the matters being raised. It did probably hold us nearer to our liberal, central (not neutral) position, help to keep potentially warring parties in check, and allow the different ideologies and ideals among the staff to reveal themselves in an atmosphere of open discussion and inquiry. There is no doubt that in this atmosphere there was a vibrant interaction between the opposing cultures in the corridors, and through the multitude of discussions which were stimulated by teachers each day.

In some of those discussions, wise teachers were able to be themselves, and to pursue their particular view of truth with missionary zeal (e.g. a particular Christian approach to life, Amnesty International, a particular view of women's rights and education for girls, an attack on the smoking habit), and yet not be accused of indoctrinating youngsters. With hindsight I believe that we also developed deeper relationships between teachers and students because our policy encouraged access to several teachers within the structure (e.g. homesteads).

Pastoral Care—Homesteads

In some form or other, most schools have a structure designed to provide times when teachers carry out routine tasks and offer pastoral care to the students. Increasingly, serious attention is being given to the latter.

After visits to Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, and New Zealand, we were clear about the sort of pastoral support structure that we needed. We had previously adopted vertical grouping of students for pastoral purposes and abandoned it because traditional attitudes were not helpful, and because our needs seemed to favour year groups. We were attracted to the word 'homestead' (St. Paul's School, 'Woodleigh', at Baxter in Melbourne, Victoria, had been planned as a cluster of 'homesteads') because it conjured up the sort of framework we favoured. We could also attach the homesteads to a subject grouping, and so simplify our structures. Each homestead would

1. be home to the 40 to 90 students and 3 - 6 teachers
2. be the place where each student and teacher kept their things, based their programme, and found mutual support
3. undertake a project in which the students would care for a group of needy people and meet them at first hand
4. care for, maintain and develop the inside and surrounds of the building

Special training was offered to the staff with varying degrees of immediate success. Later, the amalgamation of the old class (homestead) period of 15 minutes, with the lessons (40 or 80 minutes) of a line (see chapter 23) which was scheduled alongside the morning recess break, resulted in a more flexible and efficient use of time.

The homestead became a keystone in the structures which facilitated good human relationships throughout the school. While the 'skill' and 'dedication' of teachers were variables, from this base most teachers saw the less able, less academic students as individuals with an equal claim to distinction, learning, and support.

Time for Care

However, it was apparent that a positive approach to pastoral care would involve teachers in making explicit contacts with parents for reasons other than negative ones like poor behaviour, attendance or performance. The annual staff conference in 1979 agreed to take a little classroom time for pastoral purposes. My advocacy for 30 minutes per week was reduced to 15 minutes but this symbolic action gave a fillip and a new view of pastoral care. As a result many found time during the week to acknowledge good progress and to talk to parents about constructive learning proposals. But most teachers still seem to find it easier to complain than to praise, and it is necessary to keep this aspect of personal reward before them.

Reward System

With the same intention in view, we established a reward system. Offering rewards on a day by day basis orients teachers to expect that their students will grow in intellectual capacity. Starting from the basic assumptions that students like to succeed and to be confronted with appropriate reasonable challenges, it is a natural outcome that a school should have an atmosphere in which there is a readiness to note and reward success and effort.

Rewards reinforce success. When a student acquires a particular skill (e.g. accurate and concise notemaking), and has it checked, they become aware that they are moving upwards towards another level of learning, and they know that persistence will be rewarded by the right to work at a higher level within that subject.

Certificates of achievement for specific improvement can be awarded to students for particularly good work in any area. Students appreciate this recognition, and it helps to eliminate negative influences and establish an effective learning atmosphere. When markers add useful constructive comments they reward students who have presented work which they have carefully prepared. Spoken commendation encourages positive responses.

The student diary can be the first means of communication with parents and affirming, constructive comments which are written in the diary by homestead and subject teachers can draw parents into close liaison with the school. Direct communication and telephone calls which inform parents of their child's achievements often help to establish a supportive learning atmosphere at home.

Rewards can be given for almost any aspect of school life. For example, students who complete work well and quickly can be rewarded with time to work at something of particular interest to them. Invitations to students to show work of fine quality to heads of departments, or a principal or deputy principal, is another way of motivating students to go further. Collecting their work, displaying it, publishing it or performing it, all provide incentives for students to do their best. Earning the right to be in a team or in the orchestra can reward expertise and perseverance. The 'thank-you' in the student bulletin for quality in behaviour is a reinforcement that is noted by students.

In enrichment courses, the prospect of rewards can be equally as important as the practical or social skills which are acquired.

From these examples, it must be clear that a reward system can have many facets. Ultimately, we want to encourage students to be responsible for their own learning through recognition of what has been done well and by giving tangible support in ways that are suited to each age and level of performance.

At the end of the year when special certificates for achievement, effort or whatever, are awarded to every class, the presence of the students at the presentation ceremony on the chance that they might collect awards is evidence enough of a positive expectation about their work. Even lesser certificates are cherished, and the feed back that is received from parents underlines their importance.

A reward system can be used to modify, in a range of ways, a culture which has been based on middle class academic perspectives. The relative strengths of each aspect—pastoral care, homesteads, learning support, levelling, rewards and increased communication with homes, and reporting—have not been assessed nor could this easily happen. While different teachers give different emphases, the overall outcome can be the same. Across the school there was evidence that the interrelated cluster of forms that rewards can take creates an environment in which students are more likely to want to learn.

At the beginning, participation in the focus room scheme for very difficult youngsters (see chapter 20) helped some teachers at Marion adjust their approaches to students. Sometimes 'survival' rather than 'love of kids' motivated these changes at first, but in the end that did not matter because the improvement in relationships which resulted formed the basis for happier, more productive classrooms.

Assemblies

Historically the morning assembly has been the symbol of unity of most independent schools, and the assembly hall or chapel has been regarded as an essential place for the school to meet. Until recent years, when more halls and gymnasiums have been built, government schools in South Australia have not had a suitable meeting place for the whole school. Assemblies, of necessity, had to be held outside, where weather and logistics combined to make them irregular, and usually stand-up occasions.

My predecessor had seen the value of a hall which could double as a gymnasium and he had stimulated the tremendous effort needed to provide Marion with a splendid hall with an adequate stage. The hall provided the perfect setting in which to bring all of the staff and students together regularly, say about thirty times a year, to be together as a whole and spend thirty or forty minutes at some constructive pursuit. In this setting it was essential that, as principal, I made a regular contribution—I had to learn how to communicate with such an audience who would be critical and probably ready to regard almost anything else as more important at the time. If I had a message I had to earn attention and communicate it effectively. In essence my task was to give the school community a sense of oneness; to encourage it to turn formidable obstacles and challenges into opportunities; to turn defeat into personal individual victories. What Carnegie calls 'turning lemons into lemonade'.

Others would share the same challenges, whether they brought their pet scheme, distributed awards, or advertised a coming event.

The assembly had to belong to students, so they must participate, and we set upon the idea that each homestead would be responsible for one programme each year. At first, the programmes provided by the students were often of low standard—the skills of addressing a large audience, and of presenting 'something' to the whole school were lacking. Most groups wanted to use the opportunity to challenge authority, caricature school or teachers, copy a 'funny' TV star or just try to be funny—the results were disastrous. But as the performing arts became established, so resources grew and some quality programmes were the result. Some subject departments made considerable impact through special presentations. Some of the visiting speakers communicated well. We hoped that we were conveying to students (and staff) that learning can cover more than syllabuses.

But the programmes were not the biggest challenge. We had to break from the image of a meeting of prisoners who had all been allotted to a row and were surrounded by guards (teachers). Could we trust the students to come to the assembly as responsible people, sit where they chose and behave appropriately? In this context, teachers and students must mingle and sit as equals. Many among the teachers were uncomfortable in that situation where they were compromising their status. They were afraid they would not be able to keep their dignity or authority in such a gathering. Of course there were times when some of the students did not behave, and teachers had to be allowed to leave before the student body could be required 'to learn about their collective responsibility and to practise acceptable behaviour'. Some teachers gave assistance. Other teachers welcomed misbehaviour because they believed it would force a return to formal regulated seating and fewer assemblies. But after training the students, and with reminders which became less and less necessary as the years passed, we achieved our goal.

The assembly came to symbolise the atmosphere we were seeking for all our dealings in the school. It helped to fashion the school and it was helped by the school as good relationships became more a part of it. We put our stamp on our audience from the stage, and we allowed them in their turn to affect us. In the end, few audiences anywhere, in excess of a thousand people, are better behaved or more responsive to the joy or levity, sadness or seriousness, of the occasion.

Occasionally, and as part of the general strategy, stand-up assemblies were held out in the grounds when it was necessary to raise a matter of 'school' misbehaviour. For that purpose we met during breaks, briefly and pointedly to address the misdemeanour. We also learned at these assemblies about social responsibility. The setting helped students appreciate that their freedom depended upon their willingness to curb any minority who would take it from them. Privileges were withdrawn until the whole school took action. As a result, rubbish went into bins, students used the spaces sensibly, the bullies and sneaks lost their audiences and found a strong resistance from the majority, and property was less frequently vandalised or interfered with. Student action was not always voluntary, except as a means of personal comfort and relief from pressure from the principal, who, nevertheless, constantly kept himself available to students for discussions which sometimes led to a modification of tactics.

Conclusion

How could we change? In this chapter I have discussed a number of matters which contribute to the learning atmosphere of a school. The model we adopted met our needs and was capable of practical implementation. We used what Janowitz in his book *Institution Building in Urban Education* (1972) calls the aggregation model. He sees the change as an aggregate of many innovations reflecting the social and educational needs of the students. The teachers take up, as they find it appropriate, all the methods, content, skills, techniques, and resources which are available to them and use all their knowledge of their students and their backgrounds to change the culture in their classrooms so that positive attitudes develop. The teachers are invited to see the school as an institution with its own particular community. They welcome contacts with the parents and the community as essential avenues for communication with the students. They know their school, i.e. have a working knowledge of all that happens in it. They accept, within tried parameters, attitudes and values not necessarily their own (though it is doubtful whether a teacher whose philosophy is too steeply at variance with that of the school can work effectively in it).

This model had triple value for Marion. It supported the movements we were already engaged in, and showed that we could usefully continue to develop those things already started. It also spelt out immense scope for further study and analysis. And it reminded us that comprehensive education is much more than wide subject choices with an appropriately open organisation. I think it changed our priorities as teachers, away from subject centredness, to include a concern for the social environment to which the students were exposed. It had implications for the time balance of our curriculum and for teachers' aspirations.

It pointed towards careful consideration of the criteria we could use, when teachers were selected to fill any vacancies which occurred, or when the tenure of those teachers already on the staff, was reviewed. It suggested new leadership roles for many staff members in areas not generally thought to be part of school leadership patterns. It meant that we had to be prepared to retain old workshops which staff must adapt in order to address students' new needs, and make detailed plans about how these preferences could be catered for. We were forced to learn to use our resources well, especially our human resources— parents, community, departmental colleagues and system specialists. More than we had previously realised, we had to set our sights upon raising our expectations of what students could do while we were encouraging them to expect more of themselves.

We learned to talk of the senior student as a young adult. 'Young'—needing support, guidance, counsel and encouragement, being allowed to make mistakes and sometimes, even in the short term, to fail. 'Adult'—expecting and providing space for the student to make his own decisions and choices and to relate to his school with growing maturity, reliability and accountability. The narrower inflicted disciplines of the younger years could give way gradually to self-discipline in the senior school 'in trust' and 'with confidence'. In my observation, the problems associated with this transition lie more with teachers than with students. Few students abuse trust and most accept it as a challenge to justify them in actualising their personal dignity.

But what of the 'few'? It may be that we are forced by the limitations we have put upon us to reject a tiny handful for the sake of the rest. In my career I have asked four or five students to leave (no more). There is another small handful who have deliberately hurt us after many hours of effort to try to help them—seemingly wasted hours, but who can tell? In other cases, a bigger minority, problems arising out of the students' backgrounds have severely limited our chances of long term success, but we did offer those students some warm relationships, some happy hours and some learning. I have many warm memories, as well as a feeling of helplessness about many of these cases. Maybe we did really help them—we will never know. However, the important thing is that we did not allow the small group who hurt and rejected us to blind us to our potential to help many more.

The *Coventry Consultative Document* (1982, p.57) puts it succinctly when it states that 'the most appropriate organisation for 11 - 18 year olds in Coventry is to retain the present system of comprehensive schools' because it makes the best use of resources. There seems to be no reason to believe the situation is any different in our country. Given encouragement instead of uncertainty, I find no reason to doubt the capacity of teachers to justify the claim.

In chapter 20 (Discipline) I have included a discussion of our approach to those students who have proved very difficult by any criteria. You will note that whatever we did or tried to do, we never lost sight of the possibility that the students were worthy of their self-esteem, and had the potential to emerge acceptable members of society. I guess we were aiming somewhere between Emile Durkheim's desire for schools to perpetuate the status quo and Neill's appeal for release to allow natural instinct to do its work for good. But more of that later.

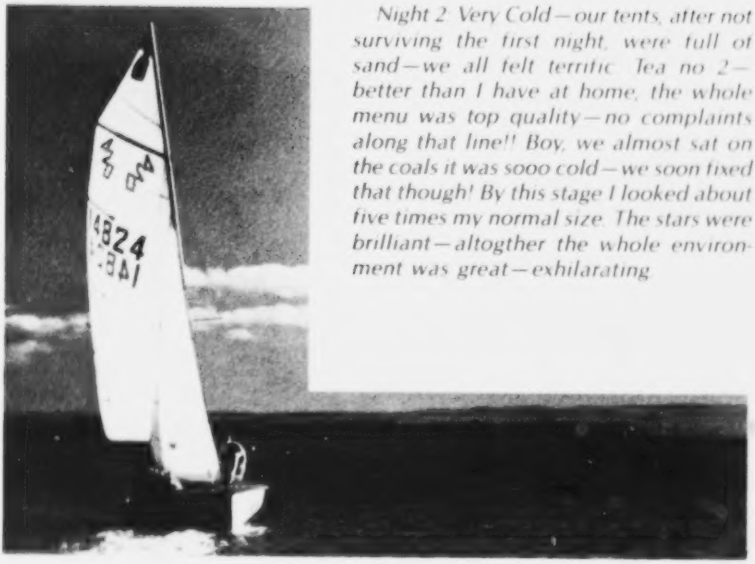
PROJECT ADVENTURE

One of the new features of life at Marion High in 1983 has been the introduction of an Adventure Programme for Year 11 and 12 students. This has been largely due to the instigation of Mr. Hannaford who felt that students at this level should at least have the opportunity to face some of the challenges and exhilaration presented by the ***great outdoors*** *to complement the demands of the academic path. So began Project Adventure 83, or the start for greater things to come in educating through adventure. Sailing, Canoeing, Bushwalking and Climbing involved over 60 students from wide-ranging backgrounds, in the taste of adventure. This following extract is one student's reaction as a result of a four day sailing expedition in the Coorong.*

Extracts From Journal—Coorong Expedition, 1983

Day 2 We looked even more dashing next morning—you'd better believe it!! After surviving the spam we once again set sail, the weather was beaut! Whoops—I forgot to mention—too bad if nature called—no one was safe—if you were lucky you might have escaped the blond-haired bunny and bird tracker who emerged from a clump of bushes. Or—John Lennon's binocs or maybe Mr. S's keen sight—they sure would have discovered some interesting birds that morning.

Well, day 2 was fantastic fun—we encountered the miniature Sahara Desert—untouched—not for long. Ever been used as a live sled?? I have—what a mouthful—I had lunch and brekkie all in one.



Night 2: Very Cold—our tents, after not surviving the first night, were full of sand—we all felt terrific. Tea no 2—better than I have at home, the whole menu was top quality—no complaints along that line!! Boy, we almost sat on the coals it was sooo cold—we soon fixed that though! By this stage I looked about five times my normal size. The stars were brilliant—altogther the whole environment was great—exhilarating.

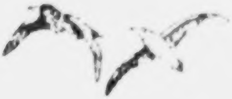
Day 3. Tuesday morning—tent totally demolished, shaken out of its foundations—I hate being tickled!! Liza and I took off and sat on the top of the highest sandhill for most of the morning.

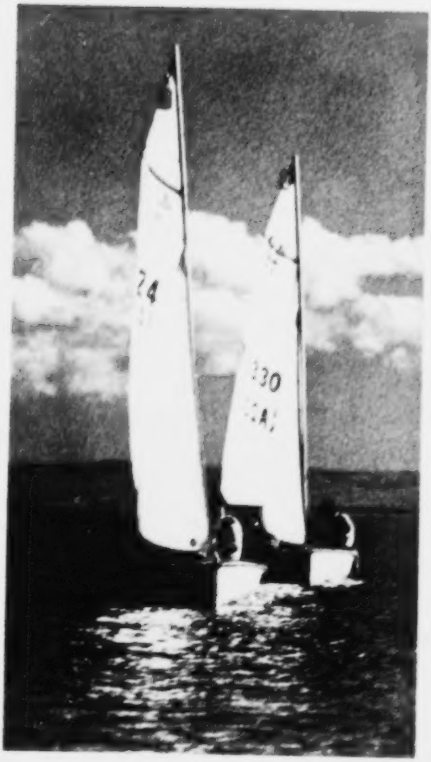
Well, with gale warnings predicted we sure got a move-on and when all was packed, went on a walk and learnt about the Aboriginal inhabitants upon whose land we were camped. I found the information to be quite interesting, although since Dad's a scientist, I'd listened to quite a bit about middens beforehand.

The trip back was very rough and cold, and our lunch at the Murray Mouth was shortened due to the blackening skies. By this stage the thought of showers, soft beds, warmth and food was so inviting no-one could wait to get their hands on the car—a radio!!

By 2.30 we had landed—repacked the gear, got mud up to our knees, were wet, and couldn't wait to get to Goolwa!

I really wished I'd brought along a camera—the whole atmosphere and surroundings were unreal—the freedom undescribable. The middens—long stretches of white for as far as the eye could see—a brilliant white reflecting—quite unlike anything I've experienced anywhere before. But the best was yet to come. I could have spent an eternity upon the stretching shores gazing at the walls of white-tipped waves, rising and crashing—the surf so inviting that, whether wanting to or not, most of us experienced the feel of icy water. Altogether the sailing and dunes were terrific, and after a day of absolute freedom we sailed into the sunset—an experience I will never forget as, curled up at the front of the boat, the rippling waters and fiery skies captured me—result—a poem!!





Freedom

Soaring
gliding forms
wheeling
dipping
skimming
across golden-tipped waters
reflecting
everlasting
beauty
as we sail
captured in a momentum
in a fraction of time,
as molten skies
glow, spreading
a haze, warmth,
silhouetting distant hills,
and sails
as they billow
Free
Freedom enhanced
by
droplets of molten fire
gold
dripping an untouchable
glory
magical
to the naked eye

(A sample of the work stimulated by the Coorong Expedition)

PASTORAL CARE . . .

Germain Homestead

As a homestead, Germain did six main things during the year.

In first term, as a sort of 'getting to know you' type of thing, we had a get together and luncheon in the Cosgrove Hall. It was a good day where, as a homestead, we played lots of fun games. Then afterwards we ate lunch (which everyone had chipped in to bring).

In July we had a four-day camp at Cape Jervis. It was really great fun and we did a lot of group activities that got us to know one another really well. One night we had an overnight hike in the bush. Everyone had a really great time.

Also in July we held our Germain Assembly. As we are concerned about conservation, we sang a song called 'Let The Franklin Flow', and a man came from "Men of the Trees" Association to talk to us. The musicians in our homestead also performed an item.

For the school grounds, we kept a tidy garden down at the end of our building where we planted flowers. To make the International Day more colourful, half the homestead made flowers to decorate the stage and surroundings. While this was being done, the other half of the people spent a couple of hours cleaning windows—what Light! and generally tidying up.

Our final activity, in the middle of October, was a tree planting expedition at Dingly Dell, where we spent the afternoon planting five hundred trees in conjunction with the Parks and Wildlife Association.

Kylie Wright
on behalf of the Germain Homestead
Year 10

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

A Care Programme

This year has been a particularly successful one for me, one in which I have participated in many activities which have broadened my area of knowledge.

One which immediately springs to mind has been my involvement in the development of a play dramatising the work of Amnesty International. Through our many rehearsals and additional research needed to bring the play to fruition, I discovered many facts previously unknown to me. Such facts included the kind of suffering endured by Prisoners of Conscience and their families, the nature of non-violent *protests executed by Amnesty International members, and the large list of countries suppressing Human Rights. Such countries, as I found, were not solely confined to the Soviet Bloc areas but to countries throughout the "free" world.*

I feel the nature of this involvement has made me more politically and socially aware, and more concerned with the plight of those unfortunate people who are denied rights we in Australia take for granted. I feel a better person for this experience.

Michael Herrman
Year 11

9

THE SCHOOL AND ITS COMMUNITY

> Many schools are like little islands set apart from the mainland of life by a deep moat of convention and tradition. Across this moat there is a drawbridge which is lowered at certain periods during the day in order that part-time inhabitants may cross over to the island in the morning and back to the mainland at night. Why do these young people go out to the island? They go there in order to learn how to live on the mainland. When they reach the island they are provided with a supply of excellent books that tell about life on the mainland. They read these books diligently, even memorizing parts of them. Then they take examinations on them.
>
> After the last inhabitant of the island has left in the early afternoon, the drawbridge is raised. Janitors clean up the island and the lights go out. No one is left there except perhaps a lonely watchman keeping a vigil along the shoreline. It never occurs to anyone on the mainland to go to the island after the usual daylight hours. The drawbridge stays up and the island is left empty and lifeless through all the late afternoon and evening hours, all the early morning hours and all day on Saturday and Sunday. The raised drawbridge collects cobwebs for seven days a week throughout (each) vacation.
>
> William Carr from *Community Life in a Democracy.*

One of the things in education today has come to be called community education, yet one feels that its appeal to politicians and society economists is often the driving force without 'education' or 'community' fitting too much into the schemes which have emerged. Around the world, there is much to be cynical about in the literature relating to community education and the practices that bear that title. The uncertainty, shallowness, and confusion were cuttingly set out by the Scottish Education Department (1977) thus:

> In the beginning was the word and the word was community education, and there arose many prophets willing to interpret the word but few to deny its veracity. So that community education became a self fulfilling prophecy, for its tenets were not written on tablets of stone handed down from on high. And since no man knew what either community or education meant as separate creeds, when they were joined together their offspring multiplied exceedingly, offering diverse avenues to salvation. (from Allan, 1973)

On the other hand the relationship of Marion High School with its neighbourhood has been a major element of its rebuilding process. It is, therefore, worthwhile for us to examine the ideals of the movement and so tease out the basic concept and its application to the local education performance of at least one secondary school.

A Broad Perspective

Decreasing enrolments have meant that, in some areas, schools have more building space than they can use. Communities who lack facilities look at these buildings with greedy eyes. Politicians see a way of reducing public clamour to have the facilities used. In other areas, which lack public facilities, citizens will see opportunities to use school buildings when they are not being used by school classes as a way of achieving savings in overall costs. Hence there would appear to be good non-educational reasons for opening schools to the public. In these cases what occurs might pass for community education but have little relationship to schools.

Writing for the British Columbia Community School team, in 1974, David Allan puts this case for Community Education:

> Based on the view of man that people are responsible, self directed and self controlled, community education becomes a set of learning experiences through which individuals and groups will experience success and so doing, enrich their own lives and those with whom they interact . . . There is a personal relevance factor dominant in achieving this broad goal . . . Put negatively, community education will help to convert a neighbourhood from its sense of loneliness, impermanence, insecurity, aberration and futility. It will save people from their personal despair of feeling worthless, aimless and a failure. (Allan, 1974)

Donald McKenzie, Professor of Community Education, Florida Atlantic University, USA, in a paper 'Schools, Councils and Community Involvement' (1973), simply says that kids cannot be separated from their parents, so that schools without parents are ineffective and unnatural as educating institutions.

Thomas Wells, Minister of Education, Ontario, believed that meaningful involvement of ordinary parents (he is not concerned about radical groups) in the school would give them a better knowledge of how the school functioned, its aims, its problems and its hopes for its students. In that atmosphere he thought that increasing numbers of parents would become more supportive of the school and feel ready to volunteer their time, energy and talents. The Minister also suggested that education is one area which must admit greater comment from the community, both at local and system levels.

For their part, educators must welcome all people interested in school curriculum and create structures in which 'power grasping' is replaced by a process out of which all participants want to say 'what we have decided is ours'. Power grabbing is not a natural behaviour but 'learned in an anxious insecure world, such as we have. It is for responsible educators to nurture a movement which enables a wide variety of relevant constructive inputs'. (Wells, 1976) In this setting the 'curriculum' encompasses the full range of opportunities the school provides for people of all ages.

TWO SEPARATE MOVEMENTS CONVERGE

Thus two separate movements converge on the school under the heading of community education. One group believes that the facilities should be accessible to the public. Any 'costs' to the school are not seen as important against the general thrust to gain use of a valuable public asset. On the other hand, there is a growing concern about what is taught in schools, and the quality of the teaching which occurs there. More people want to influence decisions relating to the curriculum, an area which has been a 'hands off' area, so far as school professionals have been concerned. But the real desire of the majority is for more information and for space to feel that they, as parents or friends, can make responsible comment to their children, and make responsible decisions about their own options. Denied access to the school, and its processes, they will join anybody who wants to be critical, however unjustly.

It is therefore a constructive response for the professionals to mobilise the new sources of energy available to them to help meet newly discovered school needs.

COMMUNITY INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION

Against this kind of background of political, economic and social appeal, does anything of value to the 'process of educating youngsters' emerge? Can the school offer some kind of bonus to adults within this expanded framework? If opportunities for educational improvement exist, does the movement apply equally to all kinds of schools (secondary for the purpose of this discussion)? If adults are invited to enter the school programme will the different age groups mix well? With advantage? How should the whole new complex of factors best be organized? By whom?

I am persuaded to answer 'yes' to the first and basic question.

> A series of actions, natural, voluntary or involuntary could move communities toward a number of changes which plateau to a more effective set of practices in our schools. (Allan, 1976)

In an age when we seem to be thrusting children at pieces of parchment rather than rewarding their achievements by presenting them with a certificate, entry of the community into the school process could have a valuable moderating influence.

The 1974 annual meeting of parents at Marion was pertinent to these concerns. Fifty six people attended, including 5 staff members. Apart from the couples, and excepting the remnant of four members of the parents & friends' association, and high school council, the parents were unknown to each other. As the meeting proceeded it became clear that most of the action was supposed to revolve around the principal. There was only a cursory comment on activities and a largely irrelevant financial statement. Volunteers for office had to be elected by people who did not know them—I think the presence or otherwise of a tie was the main criterion used by those who voted. Here was a major problem. The school sought to serve a neighbourhood which almost completely lacked community strands. Hence the school might gain if it set out to be the focus of neighbourhood activity.

Subsequent research into the resources available in the area showed that the school zone was a cultural desert. The local government list of organisations within its boundaries showed how few key people lived in the area served by the school. Hence, any move to open up the school to community use would be faced with leadership problems and have few existing communication links within the area. Thus the emphasis at first, and for many years to come, would have to be upon the services that could be offered to local people, rather than upon activities generated from within the population of the area.

Invention of Community Use of Schools

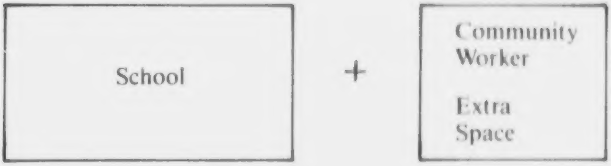
In the 1930's an Englishman, Henry Morris, Chief Education Officer of Cambridgeshire, 1922 - 54, invented what he called the village college, as a way of providing community facilities in a time of financial crisis. He was responsible for conceiving and building Sawtry Village College in Cambridgeshire. His argument went something like this:

> Long long ago in the Bad Old Days, when there was plenty of money, and we didn't care much about anybody else, people put up buildings for their own purposes . . . and no one else's! Everyone had their own little boxes, expensive, wasteful, anti-social. The one building in every community, is a school, but even schools didn't interest themselves very much with the rest of the world.
>
> Instead of maintaining lots of little boxes, let's all use one Big Box. But those of us whose job it is to run these Big Boxes, know it is not as easy as that. A well-run school may not have a spare room, and anyway someone has to arrange for the extra things to happen.
>
> So build a school, but also build a small extra bit for community work. Add an office and a small staff. Later you can always add bits to the pattern. (Dybeck, 1981)

According to Morris:

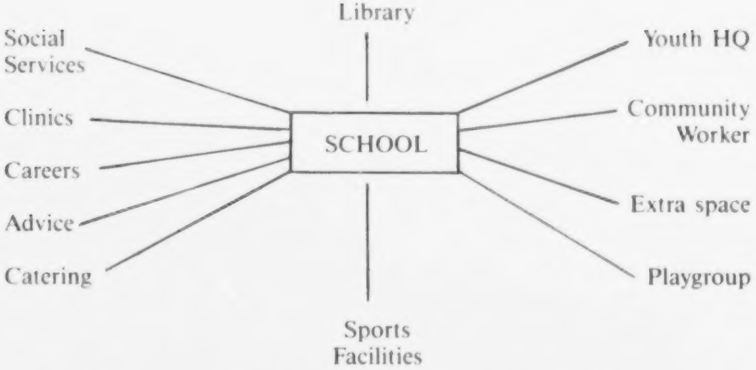
The minimum provision for a community school (e.g. Cambridgeshire Village Colleges) is:

Figure 4.



Possible developments are considerable and diverse.

Figure 5.



Hence a thrust to achieve more with available funds led to a school-plus design. Today community schools are forming the core of a complex, with extensive additions primarily seen as 'community' rather than 'school' facilities. There are economic stringencies and intense pressure to make better use of financial resources. Whether or not this effort can benefit the community, and at the same time lead to a better learning environment for children, youths and adults, is at the core of the challenge which presents itself to educators.

There is a feeling when one visits these new institutions that the desire of the planners to get the community-attractive bits up front has led to the claims of the school being put aside. Often the school is hard to find, hidden behind rows of community facilities (e.g. library, gymnasium), houses and shops. Once found, it often has a narrow, inconspicuous, uninviting entrance. Even worse, once inside the grounds, the office may be hard to find, and the approach may be threatening. Its entrance foyer, enquiry desk and principal offices should be as readily accessible as the other community facilities. This requirement does not present a problem for the architects—it merely reflects a mentality about schools and their separation from the public which has not kept pace with recent thinking.

Conversion of an established school for public use, requires re-orientation of the buildings and grounds, to make an acceptable approach. The phrase 'Spending to Save' emerged at an OECD symposium, as considerations of this kind came to be appreciated. Demographic, economic and long term educational considerations, led Dr John Mayfield (Deputy Director General of the Education Department, South Australia) to propose to the OECD Programme for Educational Buildings in 1982, that

> the original capital investment must be viewed as having at least two components:
> 1) related to pupil numbers; and
> 2) related to community-based statistics e.g. the population of the community. (Mayfield, 1982)

Thus Morris' Big Box would be conceived in terms of the needs of a community, with sufficient flexibility to adapt changing distributions of children, youth and adults.

Some examples will help the reader to gain perspective. For instance Victoria Centre, which is an inner city re-development in Crewe, Cheshire, England, has a decreasing enrolment of about 500 secondary students, and an increasing 1500 post-school students per week, using the facility. In Vancouver, Canada, the Britannia Community Services Centre, which serves an inner city community of 35,000 people, claims that, each year, 60% of its population is actually using the centre for some purpose. A new school in a new housing development in Arles, France, has tentacles of school spaces which can be lopped off, and turned to other purposes—housing for elderly couples, social service offices, meeting rooms, or whatever—as the student population decreases and the now young community ages.

Elsewhere, older schools are being revamped to give ready access to the community and spaces are being adapted for adults as well as for use by children and adolescents. In the process of conversion, new specialised areas add to the school facilities, as well as meeting new needs of older people. Often provision for a creche, playgroup, and/or mothers and toddlers group, is incorporated in the modifications.

Are we moving too fast when we transfer buildings from school to community use? With vision, the negatives of declining birthrate, the growing irrelevance of some aspects of secondary education for some pupils, the absence of other necessary elements, and the reality of decreasing time spent at work (a job), can become an exciting pattern for the future of the schools.

> It is apparent . . . that more and more, people in our community will have time on their hands . . . Those with the will are demanding opportunities for sport, cultural experience [etc.] . . . in order to enrich their lives and fulfil themselves. Those without the will need to be helped . . .
>
> There is too, the more formal discussion about continuing education . . .
>
> The education service has to find a way to make its contribution in supporting both the economic and the social needs of the community—and these needs extend throughout life, although they vary in level, content, scale and formality.
>
> It can be argued that this is a natural extension of comprehensive education . . .
>
> Open access education throughout life will require:
>
> 1 development of . . . adult/community education
> 2 a system of modules and credits which are interchangeable—including less formal and non-vocational provision
> 3 distance learning and support systems
> 4 cultural and community group provision
> 5 more mixed age groups . . .
>
> All secondary schools . . . should be developed as Community Colleges. (Coventry, 1981, pp.45 - 47)

[In tune with the convictions of the Australian Schools Commission, the recommendation is concerned with all education of students from 11 to 18 years of age].

Thus

> Community Education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the educational needs of all of its community members. It uses . . . community resources . . . in an effort to develop a positive sense of community process toward the end of self actualisation for its participants. (Minzey, 1974, p.56)

Community education becomes a way of approaching education. The challenge is to provide a curriculum wide enough to meet the full range of needs and to present that curriculum in the numbers of ways necessary to encourage the majority of students to want to accept the opportunities to learn. We can include elements in our education processes that will make life more satisfying, more enjoyable, more purposeful; and that will help overcome, or at least relieve, the negative pressures to which society is exposed.

Secondary schools with an interest in their community fall into six categories:

- Level 1 *Visible school/community interface*

  These schools have an area (or 'shop front' somewhere) where information, and exhibitions can be displayed by school and community groups and where people of all ages can mingle. The idea is to encourage the public to come to the school, but the interface provides a physical barrier which says to parents 'this far and no further'.

  This kind of community interaction is, for example, represented by an extensive foyer area in a new school in Brussells, Belgium, where elaborate provision has been made to accommodate and facilitate the displays. Their building for health and counselling services has an entrance from the school on one side and one for the community on the opposite side.

- Level 2 *Community use of facilities*

  In these schools the public is able to hire whatever facilities exist. Often new facilities (e.g. sports halls) have been added by pooling resources with dual usage in mind. Usually a person is employed to organise and manage the community usage component which is kept quite separate. Unfortunately, the school head, who runs the school, and the community activities manager, who is responsible after the school leaves in the late afternoon, share an uneasy agreement which has been imposed on them by the parties with separate interests in the venture.

- Level 3 *Community based options also provided*

  At this level, the manager of the community component extends what is available by arranging class or group activities for a wide range of interests. In some cases a creche is provided to help people with young children.

- Level 4 *Some merging of programmes*

  In these schools, some elements of the school's programme are offered to adults, and school students might have access to some of the community programmes, e.g. the school might use the community library, small numbers of adults might be accepted in a language class, or whatever.

- Level 5 *Single programme for all age groups*

  In a small number of instances, there is complete integration—one institution, one programme, one head—and all activities are available to all-comers. One implication is that part-time students and adults of all ages are present throughout the school. To accomplish this wider access, traditional time and organisation patterns have given way to longer days, more open access to courses, and a behavioural code more 'adult' than the 'primary school type' controls which are usually in evidence in other schools.

- Level 6 *Single programme includes local input*

  In a few cases, Level 5 has been extended to include the community as providers. Volunteers are welcomed, and sometimes trained, to give help to the professionals where the students are working. At other times, or in other schools, visiting instructors are brought in for limited periods, to enrich the programme.

Minzey in an article, 'Community Education—Another Perception', (1974), describes six broad components:

- K - 12 schooling
- Use of facilities, equipment
- Activities for school age children
- Activities for adults
- Delivery and co-ordination of community services
- Community involvement in decision-making and administrative activity

He regards the first four components as programme-oriented and the latter two elements as processes. He sees all of these operating in every community to some extent, but all suffering through the isolation of their operations. He wants all of the components to be developed as a unit, made whole, through close co-operation of the parents, educators and other people in the community.

CHANGES TO THE CONCEPT OF STAFFING

The community school has many people on its staff who are not seen in the traditional school. The 'different' people maybe employees of other government (central or local) bodies, special appointees of the high school council, persons employed under grants from a variety of sources to carry out specific tasks, employees of agencies using the facilities, or supplying an additional service (e.g. churches, welfare groups), volunteers in many capacities, and teachers undertaking duties incorporating some modifications to the 'norm'.

- Teaching staff would be appointed according to the standard enrolment/staffing formula.
- A co-ordinator would be needed to promote and arrange community activities on the campus.
- Ancillary staff would include
  - Staff supplied by the education authority according to the general formula.
  - Additional people needed to maintain services.
  - Additional caretaker services.

- Library and learning resource centre staff would include
    - Teacher-librarians and others provided under the staffing formula.
    - Clerical and library assistants to cover additional services.
- Cafeteria supervisor and her assistant would manage the junior canteen and the senior cafeteria.
- Personnel would be recruited from a variety of agencies.
- Volunteers. The scope for voluntary help is almost unlimited. Volunteers would include
    - Adult helpers.
    - Students who undertake inside work experience.
    - Community group leaders.

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND OTHERS

A number of people should be included from health services, social service, community welfare, police, community service agencies, employment services, recreation and sport, to work at least part-time within the walls of the school. In general these people are shy of schools and many believe that an anti-school view assists their cause. If their criticisms do have validity, close association with the school could help to modify the structures and practices, especially because, currently teachers spend more time with students than persons from other agencies. Since there is almost a culture gap between the teachers and welfare and recreational people, it is likely that the latter operate without any real knowledge of what a school does and what factors control or modify teacher-student relationships. Thus progress will probably be slow.

Whatever the details of organisation might be, when the people who can contribute work as a co-operative unit, the greatest benefit can be made to the welfare and interests of their clients. Certainly the teachers, in their efforts, gain from contact with other specialists.

LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY

The whole operation should operate under the leadership and authority of the principal of the school, and the school council. Ad hoc committees can be set up to explore the community and, give advice to the council and/or principal as required, or be a dimension of the council, as it seeks to fulfil its role. The council should use its power to co-opt suitable people to represent local government, ethnic communities and any other special group with students in the school. My experience, and those of others working in this field, suggests to me that a rigid committee structure can become restrictive, rather than constructive, and unnecessarily time-consuming. However, common interest groups should meet from time to time to become better informed of each other's function, to resolve any overlap and generally to co-ordinate their work. The hope is that all agencies will come to see themselves as a flexible unit within the whole.

Perhaps the greatest problems involve shifts in power. It seems to be a paradox of human nature that agencies who continually chant for co-operation are equally industrious in preventing co-operative effort, especially if it seems to threaten a comfortable, seemingly secure and automonous power base. While arguments about facilities, money and staff tend to dominate agendas, hidden agenda about power are seldom absent. Frank, patient discussion, open flexible planning and permanent, on the spot, purposeful leadership appear to be the only useful avenues for progress.

The Education Department administration should support the school, approve its philosophy and structure, become familiar with its differences and, in minor ways, modify its approaches to fit the special case. At base, the community school does not require more money, staff or resources, but it is concerned about the nature of the skills held by some staff, and the way resources are to be used. As this kind of understanding evolves, an educational programme tied closely to community needs and with community participation can work within the education system.

PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

It is not necessary to describe the general modus operandi involved in any more detail. It is instructive, however, to mention the kind of tensions which tend to exist between the secondary school institution with its predominance of professional teachers, the public (including students of all ages), and the Education Department. Their interaction is discussed at length in chapter 27, but it is useful here to note the 'community' factor as it impinges on the school staff.

Controversy occurs when the actions of the teachers offend the attitudes of the community, or vice versa. At best, in any sensitive area (usually matters involving departure from old norms), decisions about new procedures will be arrived at only after a series of compromises have been accepted and tested.

Removed from the scene of the action and very sensitive to public criticism or challenge even from a very small group or a single individual, the Education Department tends to be stodgy and ultra-conservative. It will be slow to take up an issue and even sympathetic officers will advise the school to 'proceed only slowly'. From this source, commitments to sharp change in schools are rare, although in severe controversy the central administration will try to be seen as closely allied toward and protective of, its teachers, yet sympathetic to the wishes of community groups.

EFFECT ON WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS

Of course the concept of community education implies, at all levels, changes to the conditions of employment, if the teachers take part in non-traditional activities as part of their employment. Because of the way most secondary school systems are now constituted, there will be conflict of interests between the school education authority, the adult education authority, teachers' unions and more recently various government departments, (e.g. labor, sport, recreation, library services). Each will seek to protect or alter conditions of employment in ways that they believe will benefit their particular function. Local groups like citizens' clubs or sporting interests may see their power base threatened.

Indeed, many splendid schemes have been destroyed by conflicts of this kind. Others survive on many-cornered interim agreements through the goodwill, commitment, tolerance and patience of the various officers at the work face, but their frustrations, through the restraints and time-consuming arguments that they are drawn into, soon surface in any discussion with them about management. In some instances I have found an officer who draws a salary in separate cheques from several sources without any guarantees or tenure for the future from any one of them. Yet the rightness of the cause, and commitment to it, have overridden petty conflicts and personal insecurity.

It is interesting to note that Henry Morris of Cambridgeshire envisaged that the community education institution would be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily for six days each week. Revolutionary in the thirties, it is just as revolutionary in the eighties.

In many cases agreements which have led to the establishment of a community school were arrived at on economic grounds with very little initial concern for the programme, or the people who would work the programme. It was seen as a money-saving device which enabled two or more authorities to achieve their separate objectives by pooling their resources. Once the operational stage was reached, few were ready to unify the programme. Hence the days and weeks were divided up and the plant was given over to separate programmes within clearly-defined boundaries. The tensions which followed inhibited the development of the centre (school or college) as an *educational* institution. Sadly, under these constraints, few ventures have been able to operate beyond levels 1 or 2.

These problems were made clear to me during my contacts with community schools as early as 1968. I had also experienced the strain between the Education Department and the Department of Further Education when night classes were held on school premises under a separatist agreement between the two departments. Hence, the best educational outcomes are only likely to be achieved under one manager who, by virtue of his location, has to be the head of the school. It follows that the person who organises and manages the programmes outside the traditional school courses should be a member of the school staff (not necessarily a teacher), directly responsible to the head, and subject to one set of general operational policies.

Progress can only be made when the leader is comfortable with the compromises and prepared to risk the collective wisdom. Indeed few successful leaders, in this case school principals, have the option of safety. They have always to live dangerously, with common sense the final prevailing arbiter. They also need a measure of good luck for some of the judgments must be made in something of a vacuum. (See chapters 12 & 27)

From the outset Marion's community programme was to operate under this model of management. The description of what actually happened reveals the wins and losses which resulted from that policy and in some measure it explains the form that events and developments have taken.

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

At Marion these issues were clarified by the basic objective which initiated the extension of the school programme to include adults. You will recall in an earlier chapter that our initial interest was in bringing the people who lived in the neighbourhood onto the campus as one device by which a cohesive interested school community might be built. Hence it was through a deputy principal that the first five adult programmes were conceived and offered in 1976. Hence it was that the leaders for the groups were volunteers who received only a tiny contribution to their expenses ($2 per session). It was also consistent that some of those leaders were members of the teaching staff, who could be given no special privileges, although efforts were made to reduce their work loads. To attract people with low incomes, we charged only a few cents for each attendance, without any obligation to keep coming or make any payments in advance.

It was also an outcome of this policy that the groups were called 'community clubs'. They had all the general ingredients of a club—leader, providing expertise in the activity; a recorder, looking after organisational details; membership and subscription; a social as well as activity objective; and a common interest and the autonomy to follow that common interest. People came on this basis and the number of groups grew spectacularly under voluntary organisational leadership to an extent that made it clear that a person outside the teaching staff had to be employed to keep pace with the demand.

From the outset the Department of Further Education tried to 'kill us off'. They assembled phoney information by making loaded 'ghost' enquiries and putting their own interpretations on the replies. In the end they found an ally in local government and succeeded in severely restricting the club programme. However, the important factor is that the school's aims were being achieved. Local people were coming on campus and as time went on, more and more people came during the school day, and some joined in school classes. Local people were sharing their expertise with neighbours. A kind of learning exchange had been established. Local people were given the opportunity to meet other people. Immediately after the club activity all of the participants and their leaders were invited to come together for a social hour, which helped them to find friends, and the school to generate a community.

Very few of these people had any interest in a Department of Further Education course, nor was the school programme in any way a competitor. It was ludicrous nonsense for that department to imagine that they had a divine right to arrange all learning and social interaction and a supreme wisdom about the ways people might make new social contacts and discover additional skills and knowledge. But they acted as though they were jealous of the success of our venture. Even if that were not so, it is important to note the ideas about community education which we were exemplifying:

- People have a very wide range of interests (or learning needs) that cannot all be covered by plans made in an office which is set at a distance.
- For many, the social need outweighs the educational need for new knowledge and skills.

From an adult learning viewpoint, the scheme enabled very small groups to operate—theoretically, since the leaders were volunteers, two people with a common interest could come together and share their expertise.

As participation grew, our next step was to bring together local government, State government and Education Department officers in the hope that the salary of a co-ordinator could be funded. Through the goodwill and vision of the then Minister for Community Welfare, Mr Ron Payne, a three-cornered source of funds was agreed to, and a co-ordinator was appointed. Funds were contributed ($9000 for the first year) as follows:

State Department of Community Welfare 4 parts
2 local city councils (Marion and Mitcham) 3 parts each

Of course, the location of the school on the industrial edge of two city councils, did not make negotiation any easier. While Mitcham Council always acted supportively, it always took a follower role on the grounds that the school was actually situated on Marion Council territory.

For the next two years the community education programme expanded rapidly. Numbers of disadvantaged and/or lonely people were among those who found self-confidence and self-respect through their participation in the community programme. They were also slowly modifying the attitudes of teachers who were finding the older people an asset, rather than a burden.

Table 2

Community Clubs	76/77	77/78	78/79	Recreation Programme	77/78	78/79
Term 1 Enrolment	112	350	460	Christmas Enrolment	250	512
Term 1 Attendance	85	242	330	Christmas daily attendance	90	162
Activities offered	12	23	44	Paid staff	11	31
Cash turn-over	850	2300	7640	Voluntary Staff	18	36
Profit ($)	615	785	1567	Budget ($)	4033	10404

During this period, the school assumed responsibility for the recreational programmes (badminton, volley ball etc.) that had been established two or three years earlier by the South Australian Community Recreation Association. Again the Department of Further Education tried to intervene and might have been successful except for the protection which came from Education Department officers and the local member of parliament, Mr Payne. The territorial battle is far from over as the department (now Technical and Further Education) is still trying to infiltrate and take over aspects of senior secondary education. A change of government at State level removed the support of the

Department of Community Welfare and then, after an unpleasant year, Marion City Council withdrew its support.

It was a tragedy that, through the departments's intervention, the less articulate, less wealthy people were denied one of the cheapest and educationally most effective educational/social opportunities. Unfortunately much bitterness developed as the Marion Council declared a hands-off school policy. There was much emotional argument, but few of the antagonists troubled to get the facts, although the doors were kept open. As usual the people (tax payers and rate payers) were the losers. A few additional metres of curb were laid somewhere in the council districts from the pittance which was withheld. It is impossible to measure the extra cost of the social breakdown which could have been avoided. Must our society always create the conditions for social failure and then spend huge sums on often fruitless attempts to remedy the human problems it has created?

However, all was not lost although the 'clubs' were forced into decline after a year of seeking alternative sources of funds. The high school council's determination to salvage what it could, led to a decision to take the expense on board by appointing an officer to assist the bursar with a special brief to maintain outreach programmes for all age groups. Necessarily, without outside funding, an emphasis had to be given to those activities which gave the best financial return. Hence the 'hire' operation and the 'holiday programmes' for children were given prominence. The movement towards adults joining in classes and the participation of adults as voluntary workers in the school was irreversible, and the club concept with its skill sharing and social emphases was sufficiently established for some groups to carry on, and others to be formed in a continuing ever-changing pattern. However, the aim of creating a school community in which local people felt a high degree of ownership was never really achieved.

Intensive pursuit of 'hire' led the council of the school to invest in some modifications to its facilities. Yet almost everything they did seemed to bring opposition from somewhere. For example, extension of a school course in catering to provide meals for interested groups brought criticism from the Education Department—the reasons were never made clear. Some neighbours carried on a saga of pinpricks, based on any petty incident, or on the imagined threats from any new developments. Attempts to draw these people in was only partly successful. The appointment of the 'administrator', later called 'assistant bursar', was the trigger to Education Department resistance. Happily, moves were made to change the law, rather than carry through the threat to terminate the appointment.

Another initiative of the school was to erect a small attractive building on an accessible on-campus site to house the Community Contact Centre.

This centre would have three functions:

- To supply information to the community about school and other events, hire of facilities etc.
- To display community made goods, paintings etc.

- To sell goods made by students or people in the community on a commission or some other appropriate basis. It could double as the 'book sales room' for the school.

The planning was a most pleasant affair. The school council employed an architect who made imaginative suggestions. The Education Department provided architectural supervision for the project, gave approval for the building to proceed and for a loan of $12,000. Students in the study-work programme, and three or four others who were jaded by some of their subjects, were keen to have the experience. In a few months a complex little building was ready to be opened at a brief ceremony attended by all of the appropriate people.

The formative months of the contact centre were difficult because neither volunteers nor study-work students could supply the continuity of service and time that was needed. After nearly two years a lady took full-time responsibility on a 50:50 profit-sharing basis. Numbers of people and institutions found an outlet for their goods, thus deriving the kind of encouragements and funds they needed.

During the same period the 'canteen' service took a step forward. A manageress was appointed to take charge of the cafeteria which had been built in lieu of a canteen which had long been promised to the school. In establishing this building as an extension of the hall, the project included a toilet with provision for disabled people, and a room which could operate as a clinic. The cafeteria was furnished by the study-work students who made tables and restored chairs. The kitchen was equipped so that hot meals and a considerably wider menu could be provided with the help of students in the food and catering classes. Community groups and school groups were also catered for, as part of the regular programme. As the volume of business increased, some of the profit was used to up-grade the equipment.

SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION

To meet the public demand for recreational facilities the high school council agreed to install lighting on two netball/tennis courts. While the school would benefit marginally, the initiative was a response to neighbourhood requests to use the facilities at night. The school helped local industries to set up night netball and tennis competitions. More recently lights were installed on an area of the oval so that sporting groups could practise at night. Sporting groups with agreements of long standing continued to use the grounds. A barbecue area, which was provided for student use, became a feature for those who wished to hire the grounds for picnics and other outdoor recreational events. An outdoor gymnasium which was built by the students in the study-work programme, became an added attraction for the children. Neighbours were encouraged to use the outdoor facilities, without charge, and in return they were willing to provide casual security of the property.

Alongside these programmes, other aspects developed, sometimes with initiative from within the school and at other times through an outside group. For example, the school's music department developed its orchestra by using community players alongside the more advanced school students. Because rehearsals were held at night, many students continued to play with the orchestra after they had left school, while others returned to give service to the music department in various ways—they assisted the teachers by helping with group instruction, preparing music, maintaining instruments, collecting money and so on. Coupled with the drama department which reached this kind of development a year or so later, public performances became a regular feature. More recently dancing and gymnastics have followed along the same path. Many local groups have benefited from concerts given by students and sometimes student/adult groups.

The presence of adults about the school has given comfort and encouragement to many migrants who, for various reasons, are older than most of the people in their school classes. It is worth noting that the community programme brought together parents of non-English speaking children in a social setting which was favourable to information sharing and to organising support programmes of mutual benefit.

THE LIBRARY

The library story is a less happy one. For reasons hard to follow, the policy of the South Australian Libraries Board, which cultivates community/school libraries in country areas, is just as keen to prevent it happening in the city area. In Adelaide, the board works through local government and the policy of the Marion City Council has made it unlikely that the public will gain access to a school library or the students experience the immense advantages that can accrue from a project which would enable the school to supplement its stocks with small packages of books and other material from the central library each month, on a rotational basis. The school library is already open between 8 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. daily for school purposes. The cost of a joint venture would be very small. Marion is situated in an area not well served by public libraries, because they are either a long way from the school and the homes of many of the students, or beyond railway lines which act as barriers. Of course, such a move may threaten some established power bases. Yet where joint libraries have been established in overseas cities, I have witnessed the tremendous benefit that has followed for people of all ages. For example, the Orton Centre Library in England is excellent for both educational and recreational purposes, and it is inspiring to see people of all ages mingling as they use its services. As technology advances, so the desirability of a community 'library' in a school setting will increase. Its presence on campus would also provide opportunities for students to give service and gain experience, for example, in the preparation of educational toys or in giving assistance to the staff.

COMMUNICATION

As early as 1975 the school won a small grant to support two or three issues of a community newssheet. The sheet was to contain school-based news covering the full range of the neighbourhood activities which were focused in the school. The idea was to distribute a single-fold over A2 sheet to each house in the neighbourhood. To interest the audience the articles would be crisp, and considerable use would be made of photographs and anecdotal material.

'Community News' has continued to be published three or four times a year and, on two occasions each year has a very wide distribution to areas from which the students come, reaching over 20,000 homes. The cost has been more than repaid by the increase in resources it has brought to the school, and by the improvement in community attitudes which have developed. Every issue has brought inquiries, enrolments and offers of both human and material help. People otherwise neglected by the community have found friends, help and self-esteem, and the school in its turn has been enriched by their contributions.

Special events, under the auspices of either the school or some other body, have brought people together on campus. Coffee nights, meetings of new parents, and open nights draw most parents into the school at least once each year. On speech night a large gathering of parents can be 'instructed' in some aspect of the school's programme, and have an opportunity, over supper, to meet other members of the school community.

An 'inside newsletter' has aimed to provide parents with notice of coming events and other general information. While it is difficult to get the newsletter delivered and even more difficult to get it read, the generally favourable image of the school does increase the number of readers. It is now published weekly.

INTEGRATION WITH OTHER EMPHASES

While all these changes were occurring the 'school' was engaged in developing the 'success' and 'care' themes which have been dealt with at length in the previous chapters. Each grew out of the traditional operative and philosophic base—step by step—unevenly but comprehensively in that all teachers were expected to adhere to the general direction. In addition the programme was being enriched by various special activities—the idea of 'celebration' was in motion, waiting as it were, for recognition, time, space and maintenance and new initiatives. (See the next chapter)

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The community thrust at Marion was motivated by a need to create a local community which could use the school as a focal point for much of its activity. It was a neighbourhood movement to help a neighbourhood school. In the process we hoped that the people who lived close to the school would be the beneficiaries.

As students from the immediate area decreased in numbers, their places were taken by students from other communities. This new student population and their parents have brought a commitment to the school which has expanded and enriched the school community. A unique mix has occurred. The school reflects the wider community through its size and the range of people and interests which are represented. But the public user mentality has been considerably modified by the friendliness which exists among the parties, and out of a sense of ownership which has developed among the local users. Economy of scale has been maintained and the people in the neighbourhood have access to all that is offered. The range of skills among the volunteers has also widened to the benefit of local and distant students. In balance, the community education concept not only made theoretical sense, but it also met practical requirements within existing general structures. In terms of the classification of levels of community involvement which was set out earlier in the chapter, Marion has come to be a level 6 school, with a sub-programme of 'hire' more of a level 3 nature. In other words, the core of the activity ranges around an all-age school, still predominantly secondary school in age, but continually ageing as more and more adults join in.

10

CELEBRATION

It is necessary at the outset to clarify the meaning I have given to the term 'celebration'. The word has been chosen deliberately to express a pinnacle of experience which a student can attain through learning coupled with an endeavour which pursues and seeks, through effort, some kind of temporal experience of excellence. The experience might be individual, or it might belong to a small group, a class, all the students in a year, to the total membership of a school or to a group, of whatever composition, that has shared in the pursuit. For example, a group of three or four students may have made a special effort to research and construct a model of an Egyptian pyramid. When it is completed they feel wonderful about it, because it is as good as, or better than they imagined it could be. They know the facts, they know their model is well crafted and true to the facts, and they feel masters of that small piece of world history. It is natural for them to want to show others, and it is the duty of good educational practice to join in that 'celebration'. A place of honour should be found, the 'celebrant' (the teacher) should extol its quality, and the 'celebrities' (the students) glow in the recognition they are given.

Another example: a class of slow learners with a poor record in arithmetic accepts a goal, and they make a special effort to master some new process. At the test they all do well—only a few errors occur. It is natural for them to want their smiles to spill out. Another: a school sets itself a target of financing six dogs for the blind. The money target may have seemed huge, but it has been attained through the participation of most of the students. Do we just send on the cash, or do we stop to celebrate—perhaps to enjoy the company of some blind people for a short time? Without restraint the 'celebrant' (principal) 'performs the rite'. For a good school, the opportunities are frequent. Conversely, a school without any reason for 'celebration' cannot be good.

By celebration we are not talking about holding a party, and yet, on occasion, the celebration might take that form. The possible forms are endless: an occasion with some jubilation, a quiet read after a hard-pressed period of super-effort, an event to give recognition of a successful outcome, an exhibition marking the culmination of a segment of study, a special assembly to confirm our pleasure and to share our optimism.

A celebration must never be a bribe. An effort given for a reward will lack the deep satisfaction that comes from commitment to a challenge which has been beaten only after sweat, frustration and some tears. Achievements worth celebrating have stirred the emotions, stimulated curiosity and initiative, and been carried along by the attainments. The hollow arguments of what Dr John Watts, guest lecturer from England at the 1979 annual conference of the Australian College of Education, calls the Black Paperists of recent times, with their bogus evidence and their implication that imposed discipline and a touch of advice will teach 'them' all their basics and maybe some middle-class good manners. An education of that sort would certainly not have cause to celebrate anything except, perhaps, pernicious decline for untold numbers of youngsters; an acknowledgement of carefully orchestrated 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.

One outcome of the dark foretelling of doom which has been taken up with such effect recently is the drop in confidence of both teachers and students. Natural resilience is checked, resourcefulness becomes restrained, and the capacity of teachers to teach well, and students to learn well, is constructed into narrowly conceived, dull, safe prescriptive approaches, and antiquated vestiges of detailed syllabuses which have no requirement beyond recall of defined content.

The simple thesis of this chapter is that school programmes should be dotted with 'celebrations' at all levels. That the celebrations should have almost spiritual significance and quality should be the school's response to celebrities who have had their emotions stirred and who spontaneously crave to pour out their pleasure and satisfaction.

To make the matter clearer we should pause to see what are *not* to be seen as celebrations, and in so doing to examine what justifies a celebration.

John Holt and many other popular commentators have been at pains in recent times to inform their audiences that secondary school students are 'bored out of their minds' by tedious ill-equipped teachers who keep them 'imprisoned' in classrooms for long hours. They also assert that

> except for a handful . . . they [the children] fail to develop more than a tiny part of the tremendous capacity for learning, understanding and creating with which they were born. (Holt, 1969, p.1)

Most schools can identify teachers or classes where the students are anything but bored. But next the critics say 'what about the others?'. They may counter with a hearsay report of some teacher who does not have this problem but 'of course the kids are not learning anything'. The point in all this mud-slinging is that some teachers are better than others. Some syllabuses or topics have a greater immediate appeal than others. And some students are very easy to 'bore'.

The word 'bore' can be the student's emotive defence against fear of failure, laziness or unwillingness to even begin to participate. The word carries an emotional connotation which, in the present critical climate, brings sympathy and a way to avoid personal responsibility. To be 'bored' means to 'weary through tediousness' which implies a period of application at a tedious task. Routine, preparation and tedium are parts of any task of substance and they must be coped with hopefully with the help and understanding of teachers and parents.

E. Berne in *Games People Play—The Psychology of Human Relationships*, talks of stimulus-hunger, recognition-hunger, and structural-hunger. All may have serious consequences if taken to extreme. The first two express hunger to be recognised either through a physical or emotional input. Hunger for structure 'expresses the need to avoid boredom—from unstructured time. If it persists for any length of time, boredom becomes synonymous with emotional starvation, and the outcome can be serious'. (Berne, 1964, p.17) The most comfortable utilitarian method of structuring time is by addressing set projects. What 'technically [are] called activity' and work. (Berne, 1964, p.16)

The student who participates in an activity may still be bored unless some satisfying emotional response results—hence the importance of this chapter. To reiterate, the youngsters must have the opportunity to see their learning for what it is (i.e. in the discovery of the topic content or whatever) and not as a process with an agenda removed from the activity (e.g. pleasing Mum). But it will help too if a chance is given for students to satisfy their desires, even yearning, for the recognition which will only be possible if the activity involves personal commitment. The circumstances may help the children gain a better view of themselves, and make them feel more worthy and have them respond to suggestions, wants, and even school lessons in ways which bring co-operative emotions and healthier responses. Attitudes change—students' productivity and performance are free to be improved.

A second defence takes up a criticism levelled at schools by some leaders of industry who say that working life will be tedious, and that workers fail to stick at a task because they expect it to be interesting. Therefore, they argue, the schools must train their students to cope with tediousness—to enjoy being bored! Again there is an element of truth in the accusation. Perhaps some teachers brush over routine tedious bits such as mastering a new skill in the hope that their charges will not be bored. Hence attitudes about thorough mastery of a skill, and about sticking to a task until it has been thoroughly completed, may not be developed. It may be true that some students fail to get interested in what *could* be an interesting application of a skill because they have not mastered the skill itself.

The exponents of Bloom's theories (1976) about mastery learning have appreciated the value of a teacher dividing a course into a sequence of identifiable learning units, arranged as Block suggests 'in some logical way—either hierarchically [building from the less difficult to the more difficult] or linearly [where material in one unit is necessary before material in a second can be mastered]'. (Block, 1977). 'Linear sequences are especially appropriate for mathematics and physical sciences, while hierarchical sequences suit other subjects'. (Ryan & Schmidt, 1979, p.25)

The verbal nature, both spoken and written, of most teaching and testing provides a limit to success, and while public esteem seems to honour verbal mental ability above all else, students with concrete, visual or imaginative mental abilities will tend to be neglected.

The Emotional Factor in Education

Students benefit considerably when the emotional factor of their lives is allowed to enter into the learning fabric of the school. The case for allowing the emotions to run freely within the curriculum is consistently made by exponents of the performing and fine arts. Art, dance, drama and music become more than mere subjects. They permeate the school and show themselves through classwork in many subjects. They are used to enliven study. Moreover these subjects help students who lack self awareness, establish the emotional stability they need to appreciate their own self-worth. They help to give them the feeling of success which is the beginning of a keen desire to learn.

The arts give quality and understanding to many topics—from simple dialogue to deep portrayal of public conscience, social comment, and religious experience. Feeling and emotion well up from the depths of human experience to make them a powerful ingredient of liberal education. Yet emotional development has tended to be overlooked or played down by educators. There seems to be a belief that the emotions must be suppressed in order to give emphasis to the intellect. But intellect does not provide all the driving force for student learning. Vitality of thought really depends on feeling. Motivation is at its height when people are stirred and excited about something.

> Our emotions are among the most powerful forces within us and it is only by educating the emotions that we preserve the initial force that leads to our attainment of objectives. (White, 1965, p.99)

Unless we encourage expression through the senses and find ways of using emotion in our teaching, we cannot pretend to be educating the whole person, nor can we help children to engage life and the world of human endeavour.

Yet we have sapped education (school life) of its natural source of motivation, substituted marks and elevated the cold objectivity of facts and logic.

> The battle between the Romantics and the Classicists begins the sad story of the inferior position of the arts in education. The Romantic view of education is dealt with first since it is my view exactly, and also because the usual method in these comparisons is to deal with the Classicists first, which gives them a subtle and unfair advantage by making them appear to be of primary importance.
>
> The Romantic ideology values creativity, experience, discovery, awareness, divergent thinking, originality and freedom of choice in education. The child-centred curriculum is a Romantic phenomenon. Clearly there exists a place for drama in such a philosophy. Drama gives scope to the imagination and thereby develops it. This is humanity's greatest attribute, and is, according to Einstein, more important than knowing through original experience. Drama develops different ways of knowing through original experience. Drama engages children by bestowing upon them the freedom to express their dearest concerns . . . It is a civilising influence in any school. (Fox, 1982, p.336)

So do all of the arts. They are the natural companions of celebration, lending excitement to discovery of new vistas and extending into every facet.

In similar vein, 'as a total educational experience, adventure conducted with purpose and plan is a justifiable aspect of any curriculum'. These are the words of Joc Schmiechen, a teacher at Marion, reflecting in a personal letter upon the educational outcomes from a trek into the wilderness of Tasmania with a group of senior students. Alongside the chance to encounter and gather knowledge of a new environment at first hand, the students experience some of the many group and personal challenges such a venture can entail. The careful preparation and training, perhaps over several months or even years, take on special significance as each enterprise gets under way. Self-confidence, courage and trust are some of the qualities which are tested. Excitement is given a deeper quality. Whilst the senses tingle and the mind is at full alert, attitudes and responses are challenged and emotions are conditioned by the demands of the circumstances of the moment. Then it is over and goals have been reached. As the group relaxes, deep satisfaction leads on to a review of both the cognitive and affective experiences—the 'celebration' takes on a totally relevant quality as strengths and weaknesses are revealed and adjustments are considered. A better equipped human being is ready to face the next testing time in whatever circumstances that trial might arise.

It is important then to celebrate all kinds of achievements, and for teachers to present material and ask for responses in a variety of settings. Dull repetition in the same old way will not be satisfying to as many students as positive reinforcement which reminds students that all achievement is valid.

Teachers may defend their stodgy, verbal, often failure-oriented approach by referring to the syllabus they are asked to follow and claim that it is irrelevant to the students except as an examination piece so that they must expect to become bored. Once students detect their teacher's attitude they, predictably, soon make the teacher's view their own. Other teachers might claim, with more justification, that the expectations of the examiners are so abstract and so beyond a student's capacity, that students become bored because they do 'not have any idea of what it is all about'. The boredom justifiably follows the frustration students feel when they are repeatedly faced with seemingly impossible tasks.

Another group of teachers might acknowledge that the classroom work is sometimes tedious, and try to motivate the students by offering them a day off for an excursion or some practical work. This ploy seldom works. The reward of a break is given for the wrong reason. But whatever the accusations and whatever the defence it is true that large numbers of students 'turn-off' and fail to make any real attempt to become involved. I suspect that maybe 70% of all students show symptoms of disinclination and that, of these, perhaps 10% vent their response by becoming disruptive.

In recent times, many changes have been made to the curriculum in an effort to capture the interest of students. The outcome has been mixed. Alternative courses usually include some English and mathematics, and students claim these are the subjects which they want to study least. In dealing with strongly disinclined youngsters I have often asked them to make a list of their subjects and to cross out those they would like to reject. Most of these young people quickly cross out English. The next subject they cross out is usually mathematics. Then some other subjects are allotted a query and it is at this point that their explanations have given us a clue about the real basis of much of the problem. Students, like adults, quickly reject those things they cannot cope with because the level of difficulty is, for each of them, beyond ordinary and reasonable challenge. And they put aside what they see the adults around them are discarding. Often the subjects are renounced because of their abstractness. Too many defeats fashion attitudes of rejection, and lead to less participation. Thus students are soon 'bored' simply because they do nothing mentally or physically to involve themselves actively with whatever the course requires. Their spirits are dulled and school work seems pointless. Away from this setting, few of the 'bored' students are either lazy or unwilling.

In chapter 6 the whole matter of success-orientation is described, and it is true that few students who succeed at a task in which they have found reasonable rigorous challenge are bored by their experience.

From the viewpoint that only a successful outcome from school should be tolerable, the school should regard any student potentially not able to succeed, as one who is at risk (chapter 4). There is a principle here—a school should respond to the particular needs of each student (in practice it may be 'each small group of students'). This approach is in sharp contrast to the traditional approach which expects each student to fit whatever is offered, or drop out.

There are many reasons given for the failure of students to participate successfully in school. The list of reasons may include some items which can be regarded as unimportant compared with the general benefits to be derived from the years at school. Yet years of concern and active intervention have shown that many youngsters feel so strongly about some issue that it takes over their lives. Having met their objection, one finds them not to be the selfish intolerant prigs that some people would want to designate them.

However, equally as often as rejection comes out of course content or social concerns, the problem stems from the methodology the child's teacher adopts. The dominance of verbal instruction has already been mentioned, and other modes have been suggested as valid alternatives.

Whenever teachers feel tired, and good teachers can legitimately acknowledge their weariness sometimes, it will seem that 'celebration' can be omitted from the curriculum. Every year some plan has to be abandoned because pressure prevents its fulfilment. But each teacher knows instinctively that the life of the school depends upon real celebration of above average learning experiences. They also know that it is an experience which is legitimate for every child. They are aware that to return to less interrupted routine would be a destructive move which, in the long run, would draw them into more difficult stress. Thus it was necessary for us to consider how we could use our time and energy, so that 'celebrations' could be included among more sober purposes.

But the matter goes deeper. If students are to develop a love of learning, then they must be encouraged and helped to appreciate the methods the teachers use. Some excitement must be allowed to find expression from time to time, and the high points celebrated. The 'celebrities' must be given opportunity to share their pleasure with others. 'If we can stir the emotions and make the student excited, that which we are trying to teach will become more meaningful to both the student and the teachers'. (Wayne Hooper, teacher of science and outdoor education at Marion High School, in a paper for the staff conference, 1982).

'Celebrations' have a deep spiritual quality.

> I heard a story once, about a schoolmaster who took his class of seventeen-year-old youths out to see the dawn, a sort of scientific expedition.
>
> It was an unusually black night for all the waning moon and the stars. The young men and their teacher stood in a dark and stubbly field, where they could see the wideness of the sky without the interruption of buildings. They faced the east, yawning and chilled, and there was the faintest sparkle of frozen dew on the dead stems and grasses of the field. Then imperceptibly a blue-grey shadow lightened the east, the merest spectre of a shadow. Then, instant by instant, there was a brightening, the palest gold brightening, though the earth was as still as if it were the first day of creation and nothing lived yet to see and no glimmer of radiance touched it. The boys began to feel a curious and disturbing awe, and they did not know why, but their instincts shook off the dull sloth of the learning they had absorbed over the years and murmured.
>
> Suddenly, into that throbbing gold, becoming more brilliant by the second, the scarlet trumpets of the dawn were lifted, fanned out from edge to edge of the light, and the whole mighty east glowed and quickened and it seemed to the boys that they saw great red flung banners in its midst, and the majestic rising of archangel trumpeters before the sun. The stupendous glory, so silent yet resounding as no mere exclamation or voice or drum could resound, seemed to be proclaiming the imminent arrival—of a King. But still the earth was dark and not the most fragile movement of light was yet upon it.
>
> The schoolmaster was pleased by the awe-struck attention of the boys, and he said, 'You can almost feel, can't you, the roll of the earth eastward toward the sun?' But some of the boys involuntarily cried out, 'Hosannah!' and others shouted, 'Alleluia! Alleluia!'
>
> You see, the schoolmaster spoke logically, and he told the scientific truth, and so he never stirred a heart or aroused a spirit. But the boys knew. They had seen something in themselves, perhaps, as well as in the sky, beyond reason, and saluted something that only divine unreason can comprehend. (Caldwell, 1968, pp. 242 - 243)

Examples

Traditionally we have celebrated on a prize-giving night. The successes of the celebrants are placed before the public who, in a solemn ceremony, recognise and share in their achievements. But these occasions have become the preserve of the bright and intelligent. The recipients have been chosen by a mark scheme and in the process, the content of the course has been lost to view. Of course, individuals may revel in the content and challenges of a subject or subjects for which they win awards, but not all prize winners are motivated by a love of learning.

To spread the net, other prizes are awarded to the 'most improved', 'for consistent effort', and at graded class levels. While this recognition of 'excellence' and 'effort' is not to be belittled, the concept of celebration advocated in this more traditional approach does not invite into the programme some less formal yet equally demanding elements. The opportunity needs to be there for every teacher to give this extra life, this 'celebration', to the experiences of the students. The extra energy needed at the outset is offset by the support the teachers receive from students and parents. The essential nexus, on which the teachers can build, is established in this way, between the interest the students show and the learning context the teacher wishes to provide.

Let us examine some examples, which could be part of the milieu of any school, from the practices of Marion.

In the context of 'reward', the school awards through individual teachers hundreds of achievement certificates each year. No restriction is placed upon the use of these certificates. On one occasion, a boy received a certificate for achieving punctuality over a week for the first time. He and his parents were delighted. His friends joined in the pleasure. The boy's attitude to others around him was lifted considerably and more achievements followed.

After weeks of rehearsal and sacrifice of time, a group successfully completed a series of performances at which they achieved a standard higher than ever before. The group was ecstatic at their success, and this was supported by friends and associates. A real celebration, which led on to still greater achievements later, was a natural conclusion to the project.

A class struggled with their mathematics for several weeks before they achieved a goal set by their teacher. She marked the occasion by interrupting the sequence of their studies to have a barbecue. The attitude of the class to mathematics improved, and their achievement was on an upward path.

A brilliant student did a special study which gained a prize in an open national contest. At the fortnightly assembly time was taken to note his success, and the applause stirred the student to recognise the satisfaction he had gained from the intellectual challenge, and the quality potential of his mind.

After a very poor opening to a season, a girl's hockey team improved enough to win a couple of matches. Their end of season celebration had real meaning, as they recognised the experience of team effort and loyalty to each other. In the process, their interest in hockey was sealed.

A money-raising effort came to a climax with a street procession. On their return, the students met to hear of the results of their efforts and many were stirred by the experience of knowing they had helped others as they listened to a song especially written for the occasion, and heard the appreciation of some of those who would benefit.

A very bright lass was given the opportunity to design some teaching computer materials for younger children. She was often tempted to give up. However, when the programmes were completed and the field tests were successful , she 'celebrated' with the youngsters who would be helped by her work.

A class of junior science students, on study camp, were excitedly classifying their collection of local animals before they returned them to their habitat. The conversation revealed the pleasure in discovering, first about the animals, and then about their various characteristics. As they worked on, without compulsion, into the night, the effort of the work in the field had spilled over into a celebration which expressed itself in extra effort.

Each tenth year student took up a topic of his or her choosing and each worked on it, following a plan which had been devised with the help of teachers. The plan could involve any people or resources thought to be necessary. A week later, the various 'products' were put together in an exhibition, and many students were stirred as interested parties examined their contribution.

A slow learner was found chatting excitedly with her teacher, after she had finally got a piece of work done as accurately and as near to excellence as she could. Five drafts had been rejected before the final copy was achieved. The celebration was a simple emotional sharing with an equally rewarded teacher.

Year 9 students had completed a study of our colonial history. Parents then joined in a 'celebration' with the students who arranged a 'colonial' picnic, visited an old home which had been appropriately refurbished, prepared and ate 'colonial' food and played 'colonial' games.

From these few examples, which could be multiplied many times, the spirit of celebration becomes apparent. Students come to appreciate that learning can be a pleasure and that, through their own efforts, they can exceed their own expectations. It will be just as true for all students, whatever their intellectual standing might happen to be at the time. Because the mental capacity of students grows in success-oriented and challenging conditions, they can all have the experience from time to time of doing something that they have never achieved before. It improves a student's self-esteem if at least some of these occasions are recognised.

It is important that some of these celebrations are on a grand scale, so that there is a chance for the student body to express the full range of its talents and interests together, around a common theme, and then at the end, to become aware that each individual is a part of a corporate feeling of exhilaration. I have come to believe that an innate human quality has been dampened by the objectivity of our competitive education and social systems. It is an appeal to schools to admit the emotional element into education and repeatedly to provide opportunities for students to satisfy a primitive need.

Let us take a macro view of this element as it was worked out through fieldwork at Marion High School. Six teachers were grouped in two teams of three, and each team was allotted two normal teaching loads at school. Thus the equivalent of two teaching loads (and much more, because the talents of six people make much more available) was given over, out of the regular teacher allotment, to help with fieldwork. In this way 'real' learning experiences were presented to students and their success justified the celebration of the learning which occurred.

Remembering that the learning rate on a well-planned field trip might be six times the best rate the same teachers can achieve in the classroom, the effort and the time involved is well spent. Although there will inevitably be some interference with the normal timetable, the cognitive and affective learning benefits to the students justify fieldwork as an integral part of the programme (see chapter 14).

> We can work with three assumptions:
>
> 1 School for many students, much of the time, is boring.
>
> 2 A teacher needs to overcome the negative attitude of the student toward that which the student is required to learn.
>
> 3 A teacher cannot stimulate a student to learn unless he has a good relationship with the student. (Hooper, 1982)

Therefore, to make the teacher's job more effective, and to create a situation where the student is receptive, we as teachers, need to arouse excitement.

> Take as an example our approach to Aboriginal Studies. The topic did not arouse much enthusiasm, until about ten of the students went on a camp where many of the resource persons were aboriginals. The students and teachers were deeply moved because they were:
>
> 1 forced to confront their own feelings towards aboriginals
>
> 2 able to learn about and understand aboriginal culture
>
> 3 able to relate to aboriginal people in a new way.
>
> Thus they were highly motivated to extend this experience even further . . . worked where aboriginals had worked and lived for centuries . . . listened to the stories of the dreamtime.
>
> Thus the students were exposed to the topic in a more meaningful way. They became excited and they were motivated to learn far more, not only on camp, but in the classrooms during the days which followed. (Hooper, 1982)

Take another example. A teacher was teaching geography and finding the class to be flat as they waded through highly theoretical chapters which the students thought were irrelevant. Against the teacher's judgement, the field team persuaded him to share two study trips and a week-long study camp with them. Reluctantly the teacher helped plan each occasion. He returned from each event astounded by the enthusiasm and productivity of the students. The relationship between himself and the students was better and the students' attitude to study had improved.

Repeatedly we have found difficult students respond atypically at a study camp. They are notably less difficult afterwards. Their cries of 'boring' and 'why should I have to do this' come less frequently, and overall the quality and quantity of their work increase dramatically. In our example the prediction of a poor test result was astray, and the teacher was won to a new approach which both restored and maintained him, and also lifted his students.

Of course, cost and location prevent all learning occurring in the field. For some elements the classroom 'at home' is the best setting. But do we use the resources 'on campus' as much as we should? Do we treat a field trip as a study trip naturally incorporated in the flow of study? Around the world I have observed hundreds of school trips where the students are just fooling about, waiting for the next shop or entertainment parlour. Occasionally one sees students rapt in their study experience, excited by each discovery and thirsting for more. In every success story, there is a teacher well prepared and ready to share in the excitement.

The obvious observation is that 'celebration' of this kind on a grand scale does not happen unless the teacher has prepared well and goes with a learning objective uncompromisingly clear. Teachers should not have time nor parents' money for pointless recreational excursions. The social growth and enjoyment can and should come in the context of study. It may be necessary at the outset to spend time combatting any bad attitudes that the students might bring with them, but the end can be so precious that it is worth working for.

On a minor scale, the teacher must be sensitive to the expressions of pleasure and to the seemingly irrelevant questions and responses. The main thing is to realise that such moments are precious to the student and any encouragement will pay off. The resulting attitudes to the subject, and to learning, are far more valuable than examination marks, because they are far more lasting. They provide a 'galaxy of opportunities for celebrations', 'as wide as the heavens', by which students can fulfil their spiritual destinies. Too far up in the clouds? Maybe the language seems too excited—but, in terms of human need, as fundamental as food is to the health of the physical body, is the joy in what is learnt to the heart and mind of the student. So I do not apologise for the excitement that I feel and express when I recall the lights in the students' eyes whenever achievements of quality have been celebrated.

* * *

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH STUDENTS' EYES . . .

The Enrichment program has helped me and the people around me. The various subjects we are entitled to choose help to broaden our horizons of knowledge, and also to serve as a break from other subjects.

Typing gives us an understanding of the use of a typewriter and also gives us a new skill which would be a great bonus if we start life by working in an office, in which much paperwork has to be done. The typing skills we learn at school are a great bonus to our future.

Similarly with Motor Mechanics, although the Year 9 Motor Mechanics Enrichment course is only the basic ideas of how a lawn mower works, it could come in handy one day if our lawn mower breaks down. I think Motor Mechanics is a great bonus with the cost of fixing a lawn mower going up with inflation all the time. A few extra dollars saved by fixing it yourself would be a great bonus if by chance we "bomb out" and become unemployed.

. . . John Leonardos
Year 9

WIDER CURRICULUM

"Successes I Have Had In School-Based Activities And How They Help Me To Face The Future"

Just recently I have been going through the long and involved process of joining the Air Force and the Army. The most important thing they look for in interviews and when looking over reports is the involvement and experience in other school-based activities out of school time.

The school-based activities I have been able to use to my advantage are Football in Year 8 and Year 9. I also played Cricket in those years. In years 10 and 11 my involvement in the Problem-solving group and participation in a Rock climbing group have been invaluable.

The experience gained throughout my schooling has enabled me to produce a "well rounded" look, and has allowed me to talk well on a wide range of topics, and so increase my desirability as a potential employee.

Sean Coleman
Year 12

* * *

Activities in school like field study, investigation course and so on help me in my study for the future. It makes me aware of the fact that you don't take things for granted, for example, a job—without education I wouldn't get very far in this world.

The investigation course that the school set for us is a good way of helping us prepare for the future. The course made us do research on a project that we are doing, seek up knowledge we know so far and made us venture out to find more.

Another good way which helps us is the Enrichment. I am doing Computing and English Second Language. Now I choose Computing because, if I can make it to University, I would like to take up Computing Science. So why not learn a bit now? Just to get a bit of experience would be allright too.

The school activities help me a lot because they gave me knowledge about the field I like. It has also helped me to participate in things that I want to do, without feeling stupid or awkward.

Sophie Lee
Year 11

SHORT—SHARP—AND TO THE POINT . . .

Problem Solving—Mr Fletcher—Mathematics
No particular successes, but I've learnt a lot
Japanese Speech Competition—Third Prize
We certainly didn't expect that . . . but my
pronunciation improved. Thanks are due to
Miss Homma
Art Gallery—Problem Solving
Deciphered abstract paintings—I appreciate
art so much more now
These successes and knowledge don't really help
me to face the future at all—I can do that on
my own

Belinda Paterson
Year 9

SOCIAL EDUCATION . . .

Working with the Ashford students in Home Economics has given me the opportunity to realise that they are really just the same as we are, and they are easy to talk to.

Working with the Ashford students in Home Economics has given me the opportunity to know what they feel like and to see how they work. Tim is the better one than John, because Tim talks and wants to know each one of us.

Two Year 8 students

School has helped me to face the future in terms of friendship with people, dealing with problems that teenagers face these days (Social Education). Living Independently helped me to see how to manage a flat successfully and to budget properly and also how to 'live independently'.

Through my Art classes I have learnt to appreciate the little, natural beauty that is left around us. Through English I have learnt to approach people with a more acceptable manner. Enrichment Social Education has helped me to associate with people, and to accept the different cultures and religions that face us in the future.

. . . Two Year 10 students

LEADERSHIP . . .

Evaluation Of Leadership Student

Name WENDY NARTSCHICK Year 11 GOYDER 3
His/her work for the SUNEDEN School
FOR INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED CHILDREN

Please complete the form below by inserting E (excellent), S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) for each of the factors listed.

Make sparing use of the E gradings, reserving E for students who have been outstanding.

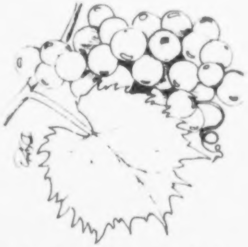
			Grading	Comment (if necessary)
1	QUALITY OF WORK:	Works neatly and accurately	E	A competent worker
2	QUANTITY OF WORK:	Completes tasks, using skills, speed	E	
3	ORGANISATION:	Thinks through and accomplishes, works intelligently	S	
4	WILLINGNESS:	Initiates and looks for extra duties	E	A willing worker
5	INDUSTRY:	Avoids idle chatter, works in absence of supervisor	E	A very quiet but efficient worker
6	DEPENDABILITY:	Punctual, regular in attendance, works until bell rings	E	Very regular, never late and most dependable
7	CHARACTER AND CO-OPERATION:	Respond positively to correction and direction	E	Willing to learn handling techniques with children
8	PERSONALITY:	Tactful, courteous. Not moody, gets along with others	S	Has co-operated well with other staff and helpers
9	APPEARANCE:	Neat looking, well groomed at all times	S	Always well presented

10	*RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENTS:*	*Has good rapport with children and exhibits leadership qualities*	*S*	*The children have enjoyed Wendy's visits and co-operate well for her*
11	*IMPROVEMENT:*	*Increasing quality and quantity of work*	*E*	*Has gained confidence and work skills in her time here*

GENERAL REMARKS: Wendy has been a most dependable and willing worker. She has shown an interest in working with these very difficult children and has shown a willingness to learn. I would recommend her as a very honest worker.

29.9.83 *Dennis Halberg (Principal)*

A HALL BOY'S RESPONSE



I believe that my experiences in the School Hall will help me in my future life because throughout this period I have come into contact with many people from different walks of life, and have been open to their various expressions.

It has also taught me how to relate to each individual which may help me in some circumstances. These people have shown to me their many responses and actions when things that they want done are unavailable or have to be altered to suit others as well.

This experience has given me the chance to work with others and also to be independent and work by myself, and to have the knowledge of being able to aim, focus and connect lights to a console which is used at social functions.

The job has given me a hobby, electronics, which I hope to continue after the completion of my schooling career, and therefore I will seek a job in this field as a radio or electronic technician in the R.A.A.F.

I am glad to have had this responsibility in the Hall, and the experiences I have had will hopefully reflect on me for the rest of my life.

. . . Craig Cram
Year 11

OUTSIDE WORK EXPERIENCE

"Successes I have had in school-based activities and how it helps me to face the future".

In Year 11 I was fortunate to do Work Experience at Reynella South Dental Clinic. During the three days that I spent there I was able to do all of the jobs a dental nurse usually does. The dental therapist in charge allowed me to mix fillings and to actually put the fillings into the teeth.

It was because of the work experience that I have decided I would like to become a Dental Nurse.

Vera Lak
Year 12

INSIDE WORK EXPERIENCE

I have found that the I.W.E. programme is extremely beneficial. As well as teaching me to maintain peoples' interest in Chess, it has provided me with an insight into employment situations. I now realize the number of supervisors when related to the number of actual workers.

I have also found the Talented Students' Programme to be both beneficial and interesting. It has provided me with the basis for further independent study in new and exciting fields, and has provided me with information which will undoubtedly assist me with career choices.

In February, 1984, I plan to attend a Summer Physics School at Adelaide University. This will, I trust, provide me with information regarding advances in Physics and potential future courses, or further education in this area. The course was naturally organized through Marion High School.

The Photography faculty at school organized entries of work in the Royal Adelaide Show, and this has provided me with valuable experience, leisure opportunities and additional cash.

'Dungeons and Dragons' a fantasy role-playing game, has provided me with human behaviour experiences which will help me to cope with similar actual experiences.

Anton Middelberg
Year 11

CULINARY CAPERS . . .

During the Year Nine Enrichment, Cooking, we have made both international foods and health foods. This has given me the opportunity to taste new foods, and experience different kinds of cooking. It also gave me the chance to taste different nations' foods, and cook with friends and learn to co-operate. The health food I found to taste better than it looked.

Sharon Magor

During Year 9 Enrichment Cooking we have made international foods and health foods. This has given us the opportunity to have a look at the way people from different lifestyles eat, and to mainly taste different, delicious food.

I mainly eat Aussie food, apart from
Chinese, so it is really good to
taste a little food from some
other country.

Penny Roach

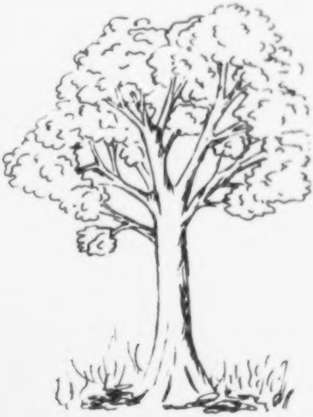
A DUTCH STUDENT, NEW TO MARION IN 1983

Because I'll be dealing with electronic circuits and computers in the future, I believe that basic electronics and computing will help me a lot. I was first introduced to computers at this school, in Maths 1. I am very interested in this field and was able to arrange with a teacher to do computing as an enrichment subject.

The investigation programme, which for me meant writing a computer programme to entertain other people, also helped me in developing the skills of setting up a computer programme.

Because I am also very interested in electronics, I chose to do digital electronics as a semester subject. This helps me to gain a basic understanding in this field, and will probably be very useful when I start to do further studies at University.

The problem-solving programme, organized by this school, is also helping me to understand the mathematical studies I am doing now. It will probably also help me in any further studies I will do. This programme also makes me more confident of getting higher marks in Matriculation.



Alex Vanderklugt
Year 11

CAREER EDUCATION

Last year I was involved in the Outside Work Experience programme.
I went to Darlington Police Station and thought it was a successful experience.
It helped me to decide if a career in the police force was what I wanted and was suited for.

Inside Work Experience this year has been enjoyable and given me a basic knowledge of preparation of experiments and bookwork.

In Year 11 I went to Resthaven Day Care Centre and worked with the physiotherapist.
I also went to St. Ann's school where I worked with a disabled student.

These activities have helped me in deciding what I would like to do when I leave school.

. . . Karen Francis
Year 12

11

FACTORS INFLUENCING EDUCATION IN THE 1970'S

In 1974 before we could get a picture of what Marion High School might be like in three, five or ten years' time, we needed to take account of some of the new public influences which appeared to be dominant—the movement from individualism to community concerns, volunteerism, the falling birth rate, the new role of the school in society, and the significance of technology in the post-industrial society in such ways that increased the productive capacity of manufacturing industry.

The post-industrial society is also exemplified by an increase in the information industry which some say will continue to grow until it takes up 70% of all of the jobs (40+% now). But, significant though this may be, the side effects on a society are probably more important to schools and what happens in them. The experts group these effects under a number of headings.

Declining Enrolment

Marion had reached a zenith at the time of its maximum enrolment of 1770 during 1967 - 68. In terms of the thinking of the day, its enrolment had to be cut. The catchment zone was progressively curtailed as new schools opened. Yet, by using the sibling rule, younger brothers and sisters who lived outside the zone could enrol and many did.

At a level below 1.9 children per family, the birthrate would probably increase somewhat in the future, but current evidence suggested that the increase in births would not return the rate to anything like 'pre-pill' levels. It also appeared that movements in birthrate across a city would become more uneven as time went on. Thus the measures to be taken had to be based on a local investigation of future enrolments.

The problems associated with falling enrolments are acute, and several major studies have recommended special assistance for the schools affected in this way. Marion was forced to monitor subject offerings very carefully, curtail reading development, and restrict library/resource services. Had the matter stopped there, the programme must have suffered. However, the evolution of the learning resource centre complex (see chapter 15) had the reversal of this trend as one of its objectives. We were also forced to find alternative sources of labour and other resources either directly or by raising funds by means not already in vogue.

Realistically, in the long term, resource levels must fall to state norms. In Toronto in some working papers Kervin (1977) lists the arguments, which they believe to be irrevocable, for withdrawing resources more slowly than enrolments fall. They show for example, the undesirable consequences of withdrawing resources so rapidly that students are deprived of subjects and services which they expected would be available when they entered the school.

Enrolment projections, for Marion, indicated a shrinking school population. Apart from the decline in the birthrate there were two other local reasons for this—the immediate area had been settled in the mid-fifties, the area was round twenty-years old and ageing and the number of adolescents was decreasing rapidly—the number of houses in the area was also decreasing at the rate of approximately six per month, as factories replaced housing in a large portion of the catchment zone.

Table 3

Estimates of enrolments made during 1974 (revised 1977) following demographic advice from South Australian Council for Education Research

Year	(Estimated) Number of students 1974	(Estimated) Number of students 1977	(Actual) Enrolments
1974	—	—	1527
1975	1460	—	1461
1976	1320	—	1243
1977	1060	—	1125
1978	950	1000	1064
1979	840	870	1003
1980	770	760	989
1981	760	700	994
1982	—	630	1027
1983	—	600	1116
1984	—	590	1173

The downturn was already under way. The enrolment of 1690 in 1972 had fallen to 1527 in 1974, and it was clear that it was already propped up considerably by the 'sibling' clause. The table of projections is instructive. Comparison with the actual figures was a direct result of the actions taken—there was no Father Christmas who deluged the school with gifts in the form of students. If the school was not to die through lack of numbers, and if a comprehensive programme (the only type which could be appropriate to the wide range of abilities and interests of the students) was to be maintained, then it was necessary to attract more students, and to retain until year 12 more of those who entered in years 8 until 11. While the cynics may point to 'numbers' as the basic motivation to keep students in school longer, there is ample evidence of the deep belief of the principal that it would be best if all students stayed for the full five years, or even longer. But a curriculum had to be found which fitted the full range, and methods had to be discovered which were acceptable to students who would not otherwise be willing to stay on at school.

As numbers fell the 1974 offering could not remain economic. Yet already in 1974 there were good reasons to increase the range of options. We figured that the trend could be at least partly arrested if alternative sources of students could be identified. Several possible groups were explored:

- The large number not in any school after compulsory age.
- Drop outs from other schools.
- Adults.
- Part-time students.
- Those who had left school, but were willing to return.
- Students not catered for in many other schools— e.g. students with non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Handicapped students.

At first very slowly, but with increasing significance, each of these avenues bore enrolments.

One kind of Government Secondary School

When the Labor Government declared its policy in 1972 for one kind of comprehensive high school, in the simplest terms it was actually declaring that Marion should also cater for its non-academic population. In 1974 this was *60%* of the enrolment. By 1976 it would be *70%* who needed offerings other than academic ones for at least part of their course. It was a single step further to consider including classes or activity groups for adults who might like to come into the school, and to link the secondary day-school and the adult activities by making both accessible to people in both age groups. But entrance of students of post-secondary age was not so easily accepted by the staff who could foresee all sorts of social and management problems for the students, and the teachers. However, the fears were soon allayed as highly motivated, mature adults, proved to be an asset in the classroom.

We also canvassed the idea of using excess space to accommodate various community service agencies. There were difficulties about making these agencies accessible to the public and historic barriers had to be broken down. Little came of these deliberations, but the side benefits which emerged from the contacts we established with these groups proved to be considerable.

The first organisational steps toward comprehensiveness were simple, since younger students were already experiencing introductory lessons in crafts, music and drama. It was more difficult to carry these subject areas into the senior programme because, while the general principle that students could choose their subjects was vital, it added to the numbers of subjects and to the range of abilities of the students who would choose each subject.

The new policy also meant that the social composition of the student body would change drastically in two ways. First the enrolment would include a large fraction of students from the homes of labourers, unemployed and lower middle-class families. In addition, as the surrounding suburbs aged, higher-income families were being replaced by less affluent families. In 1971, 70% of the students living in the new zone had gone, by choice, to a technical high school, i.e. 50% of the school population came from outside the present zone, the upper middle-class areas. For the most part these students from the fringe were the more intelligent, better-motivated students, who stayed the distance to matriculation. Would we have even forty matrics in 1984?

A more significant change was the movement of non-English speaking migrants into the area. For the most part, they were impressive people, many of whom had had political reasons for leaving their native countries. The parents were usually well educated, and their children who were often highly intelligent, had high aspirations. When we examined their performance patterns, few of them were doing well at Marion. We talked to all of them individually about the way they felt about school, their hopes for the future, and what they perceived to be the reasons for their poor marks in particular subjects. A common comment went something like this, 'Mr X keeps telling me I am dumb, but I know I can do it. I know what he is talking about in class, but when it comes to the tests, I can't get it down right, you know'. They often revealed that they found the texts hard to follow, and that time-constraints often limited the amount they could read, so they would try to learn great slabs of material by heart or poach phrases and sentences from the essays of others. It became clear that they had limited competence in English. In many instances it appeared that the parents thought that their poor English should be adequate, on the grounds that they, with even poorer English, could communicate reasonably well in the work-place. The ways we tackled these problems contributed an important aspect (see chapter 19) of the school's history during the decade under review.

The presence of non-English speaking migrants had been shown to create 'image' problems for schools in other places. In 1975 the students of non-English speaking backgrounds were 30% of all students. In 1974, streaming had placed most of them in lower level classes, and yet they had strong motivation, higher-than-average intelligence and strong social sensitivity. If we could improve their command of the English language, and, at the same time, help them maintain their native tongue and preserve the best of their native culture, the whole school could benefit.

The Explosion of School Resources

There were three avenues by which enlarged resources came to schools. First, the seventies saw more parents able to contribute more to schools, if they felt disposed to do so, and if the organisation within the school made it possible. Secondly, governments (both State and Federal) were pouring money into education for all sorts of material resources. The amount of money provided by the Whitlam Labor Government during the mid-seventies escalated library grants, audio-visual hardware and software, and added new classrooms and specialist rooms. Indirectly, through the State, modifications to old buildings, a supply of new furniture and many items of equipment became possible for the first time. The third, and perhaps the most significant factor, was the rapid expansion of human resources—deputy principals, teachers, ancillary staff. While by 1975 the enrolment had fallen from 1770 to 1460, the teaching staff, including the principal, had increased from 78 to 93. Ancillary staff numbered 15 in 1974 (excluding cleaners), compared with 6 people three years earlier.

Student Unrest

There were two significant student movements which affected Marion High School. The better known movement of 1971 - 72, which was centred in the universities, took its energy from the community's reaction to the Vietnam war and South African apartheid. The physical proximity of Flinders University brought these movements closer to Marion than to most other schools. Year 12 students were most affected when students' responsibility for their study, dress, the prefect system, and the structural patterns of the school were being attacked by a noisy minority. In many ways the school would never be the same again.

The second influence was the compulsory enrolment of many students who, able or not so able, had no academic expectation. Unable to enrol at a technical school, or in a suitable course in their high school, the youngsters reflected the anger their parents felt because the Education Department was unable to extend the craft facilities on time (it was late in 1974 before this occurred, and 1976 before there was an adequate staff) and because technical studies' syallabuses either did not exist or were given low status by many teachers. Many of the students responded to these conditions by behaving badly in every way they knew; poor attendance, low productivity, petty vandalism and teacher-baiting were their principal weapons. Since many of the students affected were in the lower years, there is little doubt that the attitude among a growing proportion of students had much to do with the the unrest among the teachers who were taking the junior classes in 1974. Those responsible for the school's programme had not recognised the social changes embedded in the new school enrolment or, if they had, they certainly had not believed that the school should make changes to accommodate them.

Changes in Life Style

By the seventies the new technology had arrived and and it was becoming clear that it would increasingly have an impact on our lives. Already more people were willing to reject the pursuit of higher pay for the alternative rewards that can come from a fuller use of leisure time when their activities might include tasks otherwise carried out by tradesmen and professionals. Thus, in pursuing relevant interests, it might be valuable for all of the youngsters to learn a whole range of skills, which are not necessarily part of any traditional, or recently prepared subject syllabus. Many of the skills could be learned by carrying out tasks about the school—from shoe repairs to complex building skills, engineering skills, and computer programming—rather than by trying to include them all in a set of comprehensive syllabuses. It followed that it might be preferable to modify the students' roles in the school so that there were incidental opportunities to gather a range of these skills, and the corresponding body of knowledge, during their school lives. This setting could have the advantage of placing the learning in its practical context. While some might take the view that the hit or miss nature of this approach was less than responsible, the alternatives were not likely to do more than give a suggestion of breadth. In reality the length of the list of possibilities would be so long that the informal approach might introduce students to a range of skills as wide and as relevant as the one they or their teachers could select from formal syllabuses.

There might be other people who had already left school, but might want to return (as part-time students) to learn how to do a few more odd jobs. There was the suggestion that teachers were in the vanguard of those participating in this trend of working fewer hours and wanting to improve the quality of life and leisure. Part-time teaching was a step in this direction. Freed from the pressures of employment, and with more than enough time to do the household jobs, an increasing number of people wished to return to school to complete courses or undertake studies of a cultural kind. For others, movement from one kind of job to another could be assisted, either at the level of retraining or by entry into new vocational courses, some of which might arise out of subjects like drama, music, art, craft, which had previously been regarded as extras. A less business-like approach to a career might characteristically lead others to be motivated more by their emotions and communal convictions than by the demands of regular employment. For these people, the pursuit of quality in their lives placed money-making lower among their priorities. On the other hand, for others, the realities of unemployment or part-time work might lead them to follow a similar life style and share the same expectations from their schooling.

Group Action and Individualism

Another factor, which has been implied by the discussion so far, is an increase in interest among people to take a group view of values, at the expense of the emphasis upon individualism so much in evidence during the fifties. Several factors have fostered this trend, but, in addition to the positive pressures to provide local support systems, there were the negative influences of loneliness and alienation in urban society and a call for protection from increasing crime, violence and vandalism. Perhaps over-riding all of these factors was a strong feeling among people that their personal need to control their destiny and solve social and other issues could be better achieved by group action. People could, by combining individual powers of self-assertion, experience self-actualisation as part of a successful venture. Perhaps the school could benefit by opening itself to this trend for community advancement.

As a natural existing community focus, a school might modify its role to help build a sense of community in its neighbourhood, and benefit from the assistance of local people and local commodities. A policy which excluded people could only lead to conflict and withdrawal of support. Our remoteness, in South Australia, from the sources of our system of education in Europe (England) and North America would do no more than delay a movement which was already apparent in those countries, and could already be detected here.

A parent-leader in British Columbia in 1978 warned that:

> To meet all the needs in communities the Government would need to provide twice to three times its existing activities. There is no substitute in neighbourhoods for a mutual support system . . .
>
> Volunteerism is not a luxury. It is a necessity for a civilised society that wants truly to meet its human needs.

While behind this we can see evidence of the helplessness arising out of the ever spiralling cost of education, health and community welfare, we can also see a movement towards a humane solution. It is refreshing to find educational leaders promoting a solution which includes people rather than a new technology for the professionals to use as a way of preserving a degree of safety within their separate enclaves. In a world where budgets are 'holding budgets' at best and where tax payers are crying 'enough', by ignoring the prevailing political winds an education system which rejects outside help invites a loss of part of its annual income to health and welfare, you give up some education rather than risk your health or the personal inconvenience of social misfits.

Community Action and Volunteerism.

The economic downturn of the mid-seventies had replaced the social disruptions of the sixties and early seventies. The feeling that nothing worked to combat pollution, depletion of resources, poverty, racial discrimination and other social ills, gave way to a re-appraisal of the value coming from the dollar spent, a return to the old values (without necessarily rejecting new ones) of 'hard work' and 'law and order', as measures of the efficiency of programmes set up in earlier years. The schools had been amongst the institutions attacked by those people looking more for sound, co-operative community values and concerns than for outstanding competitive individuals. A demand for more hard data was replacing the anecdotal evidence of soft data. Slowly, the freer approach which had been given to individual teachers was giving way to more controls.

The inability of western governments to continue to meet the very high costs of education, health and welfare services left no alternative but for neighbourhoods to set up mutual support systems from the private sector. One noted in North America that a return to volunteerism was a solution that had regained favour. More and more people were willing to give their voluntary time in return for lower taxes and other charges. At the same time, others were challenging unions which wanted to insist that all workers in their industry were registered and paid at top rates. Also, people were trying to establish their right to accept payments between full salary and 'no charge' voluntary service for tasks which could be undertaken by 'amateurs' with simple skills. When people viewed volunteerism and 'amateur' employment in conjunction with a change to a life style which placed less emphasis upon earnings, then their motives were consistent.

In Australia, pressure to reduce taxation is backed by sufficient people in the community to suggest that the top levels have been reached already or soon will be reached. Pressure will then fasten on people to find other ways to meet their needs. Alternatives like volunteerism ('do it yourself rather than pay for another to do it for you') will become more acceptable. How these issues might be resolved in schools is taken up in chapters 9 (The School and its Community), and 21 (Additional Human Resources), and 28 (Tension with the Education System).

Changes in School Government

Marion, like other schools in 1974, was undergoing changes in its parent organisations. The women's auxiliary, through nine or ten monthly meetings, gave a small number of interested parents an opportunity to meet during school hours. It also had responsibility for the canteen. At its meetings it tried to give support by encouraging an atmosphere of open enquiry and informative communication.

The parents and friends association operated at night, through three open meetings. Its committee met more often. It had been the work-horse for raising money for improvements to the facilities and amenities of the school and the avenue through which the principal could inform parents and hear their responses. After the hall had been built, the need for additional funds was less pressing, and a natural drop off in activity was in evidence especially as the government's subsidy scheme was being phased out. Many of the leaders who had been very active supporters of the hall project lacked enthusiasm for new projects. While they talked about a changing role, few of the members had any desire to help create an alternative pattern. They saw the school council as the body now responsible for offering advice about funds and curriculum. Mercifully the association decided to disband early in 1975.

The council had been proud of its record of very brief meetings. It had felt little need to do other than rubber stamp the principal's proposals. However, the Labor Government had transferred additional powers and responsibilities to school councils in 1973, and the council was trying to assimilate the effects of the legislative changes. Some members faced replacement under the new regulations. All faced a higher work load if they were to fulfil their new functions. Since the majority were not keen on the suggestions I was making or on the new regulations it was probably kind that a new council was appointed in March 1974. However, some parents offered for election so that they could use their influence to keep the old order. Some of the old council who continued in the new body were not willing to accept that the school was faced with change. As each vacancy occurred, the staff elected people new to the staff to represent them on the council, because the old staff wanted nothing to do with problems which could only be solved by change. Among the new councillors there were some who wanted to be helpful, but they lacked experience in committee procedures and found it hard to articulate their views.

Thus the principal had hostile parents groups generally unwilling to share his concerns which involved change; he could only persist. With the old avenues of communication with parents very limited through official organisations, it became necessary to seek other means. The new measures played such an important role that chapter 24 has been devoted to a review of them.

Growing Criticism of Schools

A sort of gut-feeling, that all was not well with the schools, often expressed itself in criticisms which teachers and systems found easy to counter. Yet, in spite of attack and counter attack, the feeling persisted. It was true that some employers and politicians found it easier to blame the schools for society's failings than to respond to the new influences in the community. Yet the body of opinion which was suspicious of the effectiveness of schools continued to grow and most attacks on schools received general approval.

Much senseless criticism was levelled at the competence of students who had taken the matriculation examination or entered the work force. Those inside education could assume that the ability of students had not changed much over the years and that it was likely that teaching had improved. We knew that a 'back to basics' move would be retrogressive and that a 'simplified' curriculum in terms of numbers, subjects and other course content would not improve performance. Would it not be better to respond to criticism in an informed way rather than continue to lose public support through defensive responses?

While the numeracy and literacy levels had not fallen (and may have risen) the level of competence required by our young people, and the portion of the age group who needed these skills, had increased from a minor fraction to a large majority. Hence secondary schools had to find ways of raising bare competence beyond earlier levels. To achieve this, it was necessary in the seventies and thereafter for teachers to adopt new objectives and new teaching strategies more applicable to the mature years of the students. For example, teachers might introduce some spelling and grammar in the context of learning to type, or teach vocabulary and grammar to students of non-English background through their native language.

The range of basic competencies had increased and changed. For example, an appreciation of social legislation or a working knowledge of machines and communications equipment, hardly relevant a generation ago, had become necessary for survival in our society. Yet the need for teaching new knowledge and skills had hardly begun to be realised in the classroom.

The year 12 public examinations are very demanding. It is a simple truism that few express themselves well when they have little mastery of the material. The matriculation examination, taken in year 12 in South Australia, parallels examinations set for years 13 or 14 in most other western countries. (Average age in South Australia: 17 years 1 month, cf. 17/10 in New South Wales.)

In a progression, consistent with intellectual growth, downward pressure makes for an unreal demand from year 10 to year 11. Teachers commonly counsel potential students out at that stage, contributing to the very large drop-out from year 11 to year 12. The universities, in their anxiety to compete with overseas institutions, then add to the pressure when they equate degrees, completed three years later, with those undertaken by their more mature overseas counterparts.

It was time to add a year, and, now in the mid-eighties, increasing numbers of students are planning an extra year. Matriculation studies spread over two years may soon be an alternative available to students.

Youngsters now spend up to one more year in the junior primary school. This will redress some of the problem, but it will take more than a decade before its effects are felt at the end of secondary school. It is not unreasonable to anticipate that these two measures will prepare the way for much more satisfactory senior secondary years for many students. On social and educational grounds we will also be able to begin to amend our expectations by thinking of year 10 as part of the senior secondary school. Amendments to the behaviour code alone would be a step forward. A considerable portion, perhaps 50%, of the students who take the matriculation examination have a non-English speaking background. Higher aspirations among Asian and European students may get them through without solving the basic problem.

The important conclusion to draw from these matters is that solutions to any problem with student achievement are made more difficult by a lack of alternatives for students who choose to stay at school longer. If they stay, then their capacity to succeed must be considered. It has been much easier for teachers to transfer the public's habit of teacher-bashing and behave in the same way towards their students by being a willing party in a system that seeks to put the less competent youngsters down and makes the experience of failure, which it inflicts upon them, the reason for terminating their school life. On a broad basis, the curriculum must recognise different levels of ability and different vocational leisure and social needs. Above all, a school needs time to develop a soul.

We are at the heart of Marion's claims to be making significant contributions to the scope, expectations and practices of secondary education.

Conclusion

Thus it was that a number of interlocking factors—some school-based, some Education Department-based, others political, or social—combined to mark the end of an era for Marion High School. Those people who were wedded to the old order did not see any necessity for change. That they sought to apportion blame as a defence of their own position, and moved to protect that position, was at least understandable.

There will be some who will claim that the tensions in the school in 1974 arose out of my inability to communicate with the staff, and out of my failure to get the staff involved in a review of the programme and culture of the school. Maybe there is truth in such a claim, and readers will draw their own conclusions about whether they believe it may have been possible to have persuaded the staff to examine the new factors and act upon them with less conflict and more success.

As the fanfare of praise for the champagne years under Principal Cosgrove faded, so an attack was levelled at the new principal. I was faced with a dilemma; an obvious need for urgent action on the one hand, in sharp contrast, on the other hand, to the traditional advice for a new principal to wait and see before he takes any action. The traditional advice, while wise in most cases, was given no validity at Marion by a complex of events that few could have foretold.

12

STIRRINGS DURING 1974

An earlier chapter described Marion High School in 1974, and outlined the processes through which that analysis was reached. It was apparent at the time that the year could not elapse without putting some changes in train. While the nature of the changes which were needed has already been indicated, no references have so far been made to the strategies which were employed to bring about change.

Many will be critical of the approach because, at its beginning, it included some elements which will be regarded as too authoritarian and too precipitative. They may have been unorthodox, yet their effectiveness and comparative ease of implementation cannot be doubted. Owens and Steinhoff (1976, p.31), for example, note that real changes come down in any analysis, sooner or later, to issues of social policy. The surface problems arising from classroom disruption and poor performance are based on distinctions of social difference. Additional equipment, reduction in class size or other improvements will not *of themselves* make any significant difference.

As the same writers also point out, the very nature of the organisation and procedures of the school 'tend toward a sort of equilibrium which defies change'. The occupancy of buildings was one such factor. Students all began in the remote wooden classrooms and only the successful moved into the main concrete building after two or three years. While the picture was a little more blurred, the same procedure was assumed for staff. Parents knew this to be so, and drew their conclusions accordingly. I clearly recall a parent wanting an explanation of why her fairly successful number three was working in the wooden buildings when 'some of those types' were already using the main building. Merely adding some additional subjects, for example, or reorganising the content of courses would not really bring about a change of value to the 'losers' through the existing procedures. No superficial tinkering with various details would help.

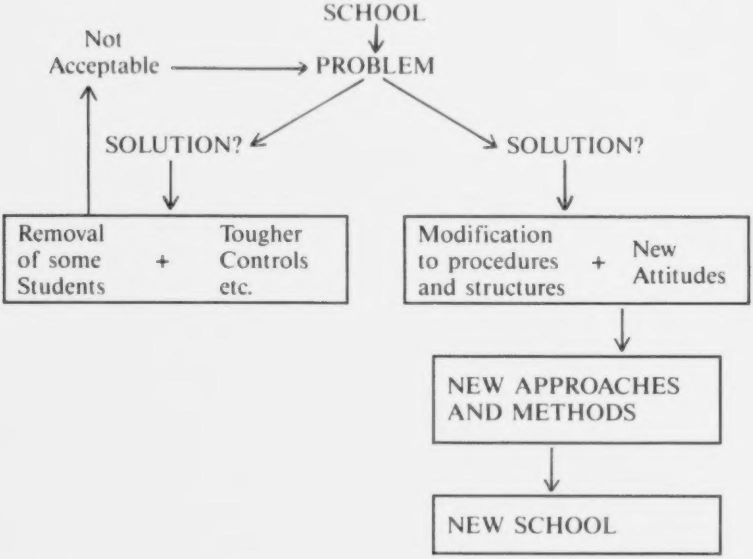
However, the problems caused by disruptive students and the failure of others to apply themselves were seen by most of the teachers, parents and other students as symptoms which demanded more supervision, tougher rules, more and harsher punishments, smaller classes, use of mark schemes which emphasised the differences and promoted 'good marks' as a status symbol, removal of trouble makers from the school, and so on in that vein.

It was clear that the school had to make fundamental changes in the definitions of the 'products' it was seeking. To achieve new goals it was necessary to revamp the processes we employed so that the alienated students would be embraced, without in the process, throwing out all that was good for the academically able. In fact we wanted to increase that group both in proportionate numbers, and in the quality of their achievements.

Figure 6 endeavours to summarise the alternatives. If the procedures remained unchanged and solutions to the problem were sought through emphasis upon the sort of controls mentioned above, we would not change the institution at all, and the problem would remain.

An alternative solution, involving modifications to procedures and structures and calling for new attitudes could lead to a new set of approaches, relationships and methods which would refashion the institution. A new school might emerge with fewer disruptive students and better performances all round.

Figure 6.


SCHOOL
Not Acceptable
PROBLEM
SOLUTION?
SOLUTION?
Removal of some Students
+
Tougher Controls etc.
Modification to procedures and structures
+
New Attitudes
NEW APPROACHES AND METHODS
NEW SCHOOL

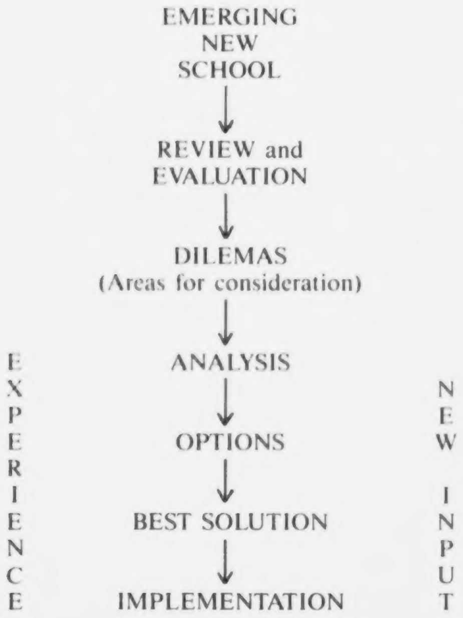
By distancing ourselves from the more familiar patterns of institutional change that assume that the nature of the changes to the institution will be no more than decisions to reinforce or modify existing procedures, we were issuing a challenge to all concerned. In this case many things would have to be altered in ways which would enable a new institution to emerge. When the conservative forces are strong, the only acceptable solution to a problem may be one which appears to return the institution to its former glory. When the institution has come through a period of high public approval in its recent past, it will be slow to accept basic change. Whenever there is a need for abrupt changes involving a complex of factors, it seems that it is necessary to assist members of the institution to visualise new possibilities by precipitating some of the structural changes which are required. I judged that the situation at Marion demanded sharp change to structures and ways of doing things, and I took the risk, in the hope that, out of these new experiences and the emotional disturbances which would follow, attitudes would be modified and some constructive outcomes would result. Fortunately the results justified the approach.

As leader, I faced immediate, severe criticism whichever course of action I chose. On the one hand there were those teachers who were experiencing intense frustration because the political change to a one-type secondary school had confounded the plans of the students who were in the majority but not responsive to the old approach. The other group, which was dominated by the senior teachers with long service in the school, was still working in the old context and, up to this point, was not having the difficulties being experienced by the others. Their students had already been selected, and their perspective was to keep this situation. They claimed that the problems of their colleagues were self-induced. In any case, the difficulties need not move into the upper school because terminal courses could move problem students out by the end of year 10. After listening very carefully, my sympathy was with the students who were restless. The task was to carry into reality the structural motivation which came from the act of parliament which made for one kind of secondary school with a comprehensive role. The initial movement to recognise radically new aims and objectives could be followed by the long process of spiralling development, which takes on part solutions or currently best compromises.

Marion's future depended upon its ability to keep its reputation for scholarship (and even enhance it), while it also offered suitable satisfying education to the remainder of the student body for the full five years. As the years passed, the proportion of students not able to benefit from predominantly academic studies would increase. An analysis of the school population showed that in distribution, and social context, it was very close to that of the State as a whole. Conveniently then, we could use the State's norms for a study of the outcomes—such variables as percentage matriculants, performance, students taking secondary school certificate examinations and school retention levels, would provide indicators of the success or otherwise of our plans.

The approach to working through the various problems was a mature one. New inputs would be tested against experience and decisions would be made about the options to be followed. In this way all members of the staff could participate. But of course there were those who would not own the problem or countenance new inputs. They wanted the status quo, and they would not acknowledge that there were problems. However, in the mixed climate which developed, several staff members did review their own practices, identify the nature of their problems and attempt solutions. But the success of these people did little to reduce the general tensions.

Figure 7.



But the basic assumptions about the role of the school were fundamental to the difficulty. Because the full range of students (socio-economically, social class, ethnically different, widely different interests, abilities, aspirations) was already in the school, stretching up to year 10 and to a lesser degree into years 11 and 12, there was no time to work out the role for the school in advance. From this standpoint, the staff were in two camps—those who accepted reality, and those who did not choose to recognise the change to the school population.

The difficulties we were facing were underlined at the end of year conference, a week spent in residence away from the school campus to work through the problems of the school. The staff decision was to work in faculties, who spent much of their time making cosmetic changes to the content of the syllabuses by rearranging the order in which topics would be introduced. However, the opportunity to share in smaller groups, and the cohesiveness which began to emerge, made the conference significant and valuable. In this circumstance, while many attempted to maintain the past, discussion inevitably began to address the needs of new groups of students. Thus, although the written outcomes were disappointing, considerable progress was made toward an appreciation of the problems some staff members were experiencing.

While the situation throughout 1974 was difficult and confused, the structural changes which did occur provided the context for the emotional impact, and the mix of experiences which modified attitudes, created useful debate and started the school on a new path.

EARLY IMPACT

The school was experiencing difficulty in settling its various offerings on a timetable at the beginning of 1974. In an attempt to be helpful, I suggested an alternative method of timetabling with a structure which allowed for greater flexibility and easier construction. The idea implied a radical change of approach, because the teachers were allotted *after* the subjects had been distributed. I had claimed that by this means some of the complexities and problems currently facing those responsible for the timetable could be overcome (see chapter 23). Suddenly the proposal was announced, as a fait accompli, and then the various implications were recognised by the teachers. Although I had not intended that the alternative approach be taken up without prior discussion and consideration, I did not reverse the decision, because the new timetable had a number of elements which would provide structural motivation. The periods were 40, 60 and 80 minutes in duration, and each combination contained a mix of 40 minutess and 60 or 80 minutes, or both. This would immediately challenge the traditional teaching methods which favoured 40 minute lessons throughout the school, except that the craft subjects were used to having 120 minute periods. Now, with mathematics, sciences and English, and some other subjects taught in a particular year level occurring at the same time, a chance was provided for classes to be levelled (chapter 7). Of course, it was not these possibilities which commended the new form of timetable. On the contrary, the difficulties it presented to the traditionalists brought forward a number of myths which carried portents of disaster.

As the first few weeks elapsed it became clear that, while solutions were demanded, few wanted to accept the solutions offered—any more than they had been prepared to search for solutions of their own. The response was predictable, as well as difficult. Happily, the school settled to the new timetable very quickly, and several teachers began to appreciate the new opportunities it offered. With the help of this minority of teachers I set out to help all of the staff, and many found advantages they had not suspected. But it was clear that it would be a long time before the students got full value. However, none was worse off, and many were much better off than they would otherwise have been. The real aim had been accomplished because we now had a useful debate about alternative methods, which would eventually benefit many students, and increase their learning opportunities.

The new timetable model provided a slot of four periods for what was called Enrichment—short courses which aim to develop leisure time interests. The school was facing difficulties with its 'clubs' plan, which had operated for several years in many exciting ways during lunch time and after school. This plan was an extension of the considerable sports programme. However, participation by students had been seriously reduced by the impact of those who were suggesting images of schools as prisons which destroyed individuality and withdrew personal freedom. Staff enthusiasm, for what had been an enlightened feature of the school's programme, had also been dampened.

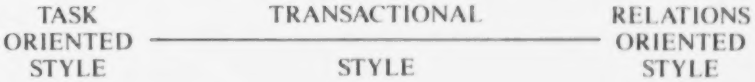
Here was an opportunity to incorporate these extra-curricula activities and give them curricular status. Within a few weeks, the programme was in place, and there were signs that many of the students and teachers were approving.

Thus, by an alteration to a basic structure which affected everybody, the school was motivated and mobilised for change. Before other aspects are described, it is instructive to think in a theoretical context about the changes which had been introduced, and to speculate about the wisdom of the course taken.

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

There is much research about leadership style which appears to suggest that there is no particular merit in one or other style. However, closer examination seems to suggest that this generalisation should be qualified. Good leadership will vary in style according to the circumstances of each particular situation. The transactional leader will alter his style along a continuum between the extremes.

Figure 8.



The relations-oriented emphasis encourages participation, and this kind of atmosphere does have good effects upon the human organisation of a school.

Getzels and Guba (1957) refer to the nomothetic dimension of leadership, which refers to the needs of the institution, its role and the outcomes it expects. These researchers also address the human element in an institution—the individual's personality and needs—which they call the idiographic dimension. On most occasions, the issues are a mix which is concerned about harmony between the needs of the institution and those of the individual. But there will be times when the two interests are in conflict. From these perspectives, the wise leader, wanting the best of both worlds, will try to operate so that the institutional goals of most value to the individual are achieved. For example, a teacher may be repeatedly late, thus causing considerable inconvenience to colleagues and students, in ways which reduce learning. The nomothetic approach, with its goal-centred, task-oriented emphasis, requires action according to the book—the teacher is reprimanded, and directed to be punctual, and perhaps 'sign-on', as evidence that the requirement is met. On the other hand, the idiographic mode expresses sympathy, takes pains to explain and persuade. The leader seeks, through sympathy maybe, to obtain punctuality for the sake of the institution. Different people will respond to either approach in different ways, and the leader may have to exercise both approaches before a change to punctuality occurs. In these days, leaders are pushed to list reasons, and be on-side with staff members. This pressure makes them vulnerable to soft data, so that they may judge it best to put aside, for a time, actions which would best serve the institution.

Evidence suggests that for a staff bigger than 20 - 25 the personal-relationship's style breaks down and a task-oriented response will follow any attempt to introduce an issue about human relationships. It becomes necessary, to take sufficient time to make all of the personal or small group contacts which are necessary to translate the emphasis upon the task to one of the concern for the attitudes that the relevant people might express.

The kind of idiographic pressure which has given emphasis to the individual has also encouraged leaders to adopt democratic decision-making as the ultimate, most desirable form of participation. Whatever its advantages, experience has shown that few teachers are prepared to participate to this extent, and the mechanics of the operation can become so cumbersome and time-consuming that progress is thwarted by apathy and frustration. In fact, it is difficult to create the essentials for democracy to operate because most decisions in a school involve power blocks of different size and experience, and with sharply conflicting interests. Decisions contrary to general policy are inevitable. Hence the emphasis comes back upon the leader who, in a participatory context, is expected to make decisions. He becomes the central change-agent, and by definition, this is his role as leader.

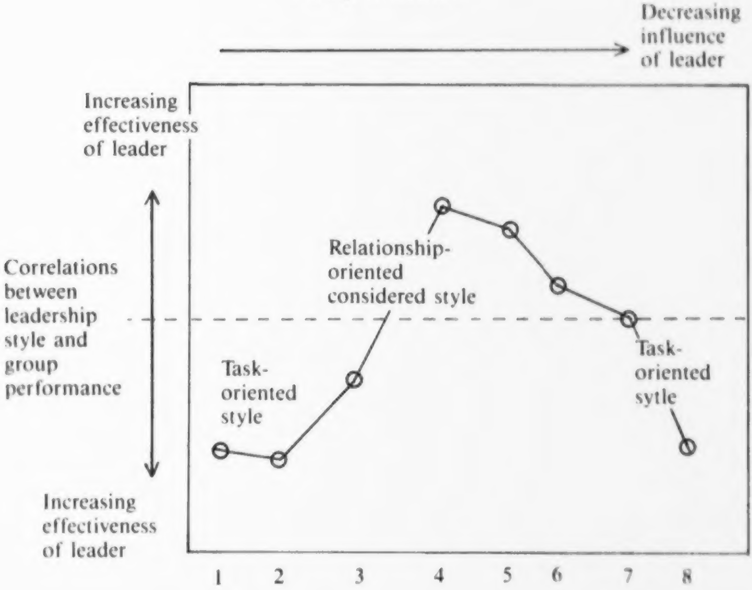
Fiedler's theories (1969) take Getzels further. He identifies three critical dimensions—position power of the leader, task structure, and leader-member personal relationships.

> The position power of the leader refers to the status distance which exists between the leader and his group. It is often thought of as the amount and kind of authority associated with the leaders position. Fiedler considers position power to be the least important of the three dimensions. The second dimension, task structure, refers to the degree to which the group's work is programmed or routinized, as opposed to being vague and ambiguous. Curriculum and instructional problem solving, invention and creative decision-making, are potentially less structured than administering the attendance procedure, safety program, or examination schedule of a school. The third dimension, leader-member relations, emerged from Fiedler's research as the most important factor in determining the leader's influence over his group. This dimension refers to the degree to which group members trust and like the leader. (Sergiovanni & Stanatt, 1971, p.201)

Figure 9 indicates how these three factors interact. Because the response of a large group will always have task type character, the impact of any new decision will initially tend to create new structures and organisational forms without human concern. The leader has the subsequent task of working with sub-groups and establishing the good relationships-oriented emphasis that is intended for the particular measure.

Figure 9.

Group Situation



Leader-member relations	Good				Poor			
Task structure	Structured		Un-Structured		Structured		Un-Structured	
Leader position power	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak

The contingency model for leadership effectiveness. From Fred D. Fiedler, Style or Circumstance: The leadership Enigma, *Psychology today*, vol. 2, no. 10, March, 1969, p. 42.)

Strategies

As the new principal at Marion I did not wish the school's reputation to fall, and yet the conditions for a drop in public esteem were already there:

- poor performance at the public examinations
- a falling enrolment which was read as arising from public recognition of decay
- non-English speaking migrants not being welcome in Anglo-Saxon communities
- the falling socio-economic status of the neighbourhood, especially when compared with the neighbouring areas.

The old school depended upon good examination results for its image as a successful school. There was little for comfort in matriculation results of 1972 and 1973. Likewise, leaving results were down. Immediate ways to bring some improvement were not hard to find, for the corrective measures could be traditional ones—a tightening of classroom discipline, a rise in productivity (including homework) and improvement in testing (in some cases an increase from none to some). However, it was unlikely that any improvements to year 12 performances would be reflected in the results at the end of 1974, except, perhaps, to arrest the downward trend. As it turned out, there was a sufficient response among staff (they had a position they wanted badly to defend) to achieve leaving results that were very good and marginally better matriculation performances. That the matriculation results were still not good was not missed by the public, who seemed to be unaware of the poor achievements of earlier years. The time-lag should not have been unexpected.

The situation was complicated by the counter effects of these four factors upon one another. Falling numbers called for a steady withdrawal of subject offerings, while the other forces required an imaginative expansion of options for students. Both immigrants and working-class youngsters needed separate developments of a special nature. In brief, I resolved to try to turn the various factors to advantage by planning a 'new school', yet retaining the best of the old. I realized that any action or lack of action on my part would bring criticism, and I had to accept the probability that there might be further deterioration (for the old reasons) before things improved. I should therefore act, with as much support as I could muster, according to conscience, and the evidence from our researches. I would give considerable energy to explaining the factors operating, and their significance to the action I was taking. I knew I could change the structure more easily than I would change the views of the people. I also knew that the structure had to be changed in some ways to facilitate and even enforce changes in the people. I would seek to engage, from among the staff, student and parent bodies, others of similar broad views, people of good will, thoughtful people and others who might give support. The resulting tension would not be a bad thing if it could be contained. I felt that if I could manage the situation correctly I had the numbers—the junior staff who had suffered and rebelled the previous year would support movements they could see giving benefit to themselves and to students. My slogan often became 'the school is for students and not teachers'. The problems of this approach are discussed in detail in chapter 27 (Roles of the Principal).

The charge that the solutions to problems, or that the new ideas came off the top of my head, was far from true. In most cases each problem had been defined and 'solved' by consideration of a range of alternatives taken in relation to our stated aims. Such an approach left little room for prejudice, self-interest and humbug, but called into action any leadership skills I was able to summon.

On the whole, the staff had at least a gut-feeling that something had gone wrong with the old Marion. Few, however, had thought educationally for many years, if ever. Some were good at 'getting results' in public examinations. There were some wonderful teachers who were stimulating to students, resourceful and in complete command of their pedagogy. Few were other than lovable people anxious to do a job. A small number were very willing to grasp the chance to improve their performance.

It was therefore fortuitous and a turning point in this battle when I undertook to do a little teaching. (I took each year 9 science class for about a month). A meeting called by those teachers who were strong opponents, and described later in the chapter, also helped my cause.

THE OUTCOME

It is interesting to examine what happened in the light of new 'leadership' theory. The approach was task-oriented, yet the ultimate goal was aimed at modifying the behaviours of individuals. While the initial effects were upon procedures and structures, ultimately we were able to improve relationships, effective communication and sympathy between individuals.

The immediate responses of staff members took the form suggested by Fiedler's (1969) research: e.g. those on-side (or not off-side) with me took on the new ideas as mere procedural changes, and they sought to adapt their behaviour to fit a different framework. Those who were off-side often took up a different area, and pursued it 'because somebody had to do it'.

The big problem for me was to find the time and opportunities to work with whoever I could, and as closely as possible, so that they could take on new thinking and own the action they could now take within a new framework.

By the end of the year, many teachers were doing things *in the new* way. There were many classes which were functioning better. Productivity was up and disruption was down. If any of these people recognised the origins of the better conditions and performance they were enjoying, they did not let on to me. This attitude was not unexpected, though it was testing for the leader. But better days were coming, and the increasing incidence of teacher-initiated, constructive conversations was the sign of gently changing attitudes. For the most part, change came out of frustration, rather than calculated steps toward meeting the needs of a new group of students.

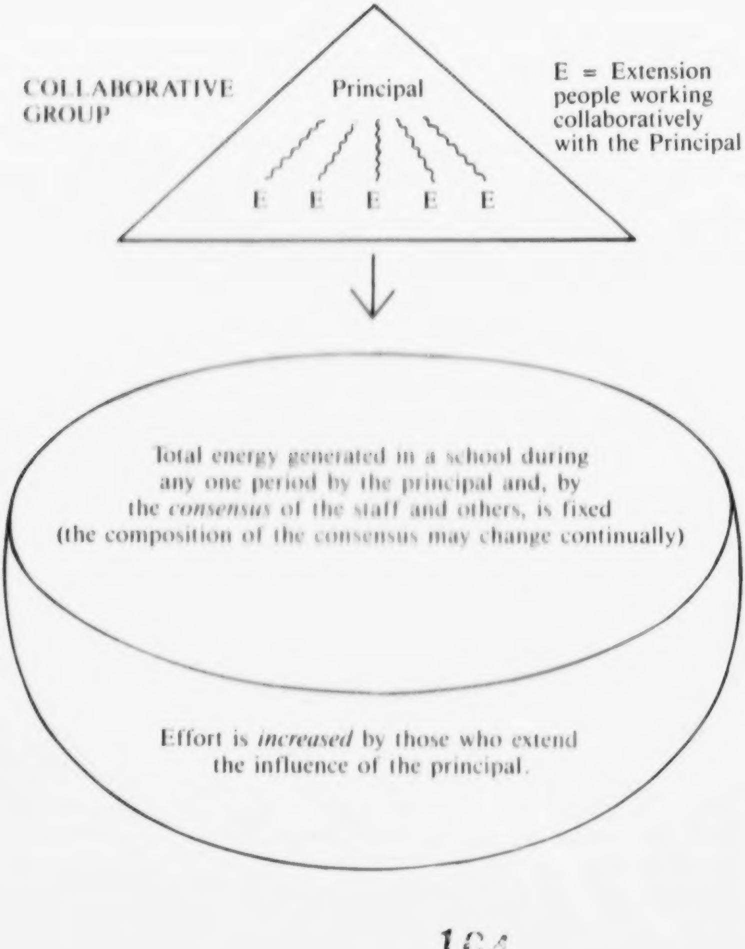
I had a feeling that I was not communicating as well as I should have been, and considerable effort was given to trying to develop new approaches, phrases, explanations and so on. I was not always starting where the teachers were in their understanding of their role. It was during this period that I discovered by accident that teaching by parable was a useful method. In this context, the emotion involved in any change in attitude was directed toward the students and away from the school's administration. It helped teachers to own what were their problems.

For a large staff, there was no 'mass' approach to motivating relationship-oriented change. Any action that was generally proposed, of necessity, gave a 'task' result. The depth of understanding which would result in better relationships, and create a better climate for learning, would come later, and only after considerable effort.

In my alone-ness, I think I failed to appreciate the work of a slowly increasing number of those in promotion positions who appreciated the new framework, had sympathy with the full range of students, and held attitudes congruent with my own. These people had the will to extend my influence and, in spite of me, they did give considerable help. My actions must have disappointed them when they appeared to be grouped with others with less goodwill. I was discovering the value of a collaborative group, and the wisdom of those students of leadership who were advocating that it is necessary for leaders seeking change to be able to choose assistants who share their philosophical stance.

I am now able to advocate the collaborative-consensus model of leadership which distinguishes the roles of the leader as the central agent of change from the management-maintenance role of the consensus which already exists and

Figure 10.


COLLABORATIVE GROUP
Principal
E E E E E
E = Extension people working collaboratively with the Principal
Total energy generated in a school during any one period by the principal and, by the *consensus* of the staff and others, is fixed (the composition of the consensus may change continually)
Effort is *increased* by those who extend the influence of the principal.

determines how the institution operates. It is sufficient to note here that the task of the collaborative group is to extend the leader's influence and increase the energy the institution gives to reviewing its performance, and to implementing new ways of doing things. In so far as new approaches are deemed to be successful, the consensus of the majority of people in the institutional community is modified. The model recognises that any leader will only generate a finite amount of energy, and this will be short of the energy and effort required in most schools to make basic alterations to attitudes and philosophies. By using others, more can be achieved, and energy in one area will not wane while another area is tackled.

It was on this basis that the movements towards comprehensiveness, better techniques, equal esteem, care for each other and a new culture gained momentum. As tensions eased, I became more able to appreciate the perspectives and difficulties of others, and to share their concerns with them. Gradually more teachers were willing to collaborate and the total energy given to achieving changes increased. On a general base, as the school became clearer about where it was going, more teachers were able to use their professional capacities to modify their approaches.

On the whole, research backs up the general impact of the action taken in 1974. In retrospect, it is doubtful whether an alternative style would have been as productive in the shorter, or longer term, and it is doubtful whether changes of the order required could have been achieved without tension.

Other Changes

There were other moves during 1974. One set of initiatives concerned the processes by which the student body was given an opportunity to comment upon and come to understand what was happening. The general methodology has already been described in chapter 2. By talking with the students, and listening to their comments usually without any judgemental comment, I appeared to be building their confidence in me, as principal. There were things happening around them which were obviously different, and these modifications encouraged comments which portrayed their hopes and fears. For example, they were aware that 'levelling' (see chapter 7) was being attempted, that they could use the buildings during breaks, and that the notices forbidding access to the staff rooms and foyer had been taken down.

> We all thought that he was crazy, or worse, but later we concluded that he was ahead of his time. (Comment of an old scholar of that era, to a conference of teachers, Whyalla, 1985.)

Some senior students who were steeped in the traditions and numbered among the intellectual winners shared the fears of the conservative members of staff. Others had experienced occasions when some staff members acted as though these changes had not occurred.

Some of the tentative attempts to relax authority had occurred as the processes of data collection were going on, and it was useful to hear a child's response, or to be able to comment on a question. It was apparent that real attitudinal changes would only occur slowly, and that there was a learning process involved for many of the students. But it was clear that most students welcomed the changes and showed themselves ready to be responsive.

To help achieve changes to attitude and behaviour, the regular school assemblies, which have already been described (chapter 8), played an important part. They gave a living example in which the nature of freedom and responsibility could be experienced. The attitudes of all parties could be modified from this base! It seemed that a feeling of community was emerging. A delicate balance between 'authority' and 'responsible freedom' was gradually developing in the school, and transferring into the classrooms where it really mattered. The school was learning about itself and gradually becoming more consistent in its responses.

And while this process was going on, students' and parents' comments continued to be sought and received. 'Normal' teaching of subjects within the existing structures had to continue without the benefit of a time-space to stop, plan, and start again.

The prefect body was elected by the students and staff. The staff vote was weighted. The process of election had replaced appointments a few years before. The prefects saw themselves as elected representatives who were privileged to confront the staff and the principal in a quest for students' rights. Their influence had been superficial, and the prefect body had concerned itself about matters like wearing uniform and sharing 'policy' tasks with staff. When pushed on an issue, the prefects had usually backed off. The election result in 1974 was controversial, because the rules restricted the number of students who were repeating year 12 and a compromise was necessary to cool emotions. The induction ceremony was traditional, and referred to leadership, loyalty, and maintenance of the honour of the school. In response, the head prefects gave a guarantee to students that the prefects would be pleased to deal with their problems. Some of those elected symbolised a reaction against authority by dressing as badly as they could.

The next event in student governance was the prefect camp. Here again, some students made an attack on authority by smoking overtly. Others gave the event a low priority, and just dropped in and out. The principal was invited to visit and join in the discussions, which began with consideration of the prefects' role. The split between tradition and the new freedom of expression made useful decisions difficult. I tried to steer them into considering a service role and, on request, made some suggestions, all of which were rejected, with only a light veil obscuring their belief that the principal was verging on the imbecilic. However, next day, in his absence, the prefects made tentative plans to conduct some student activities which had a service orientation. Some of the prefects had a difficult year because some staff members tried to use them to behave in ways which would embarrass the principal. However, attacks upon the structures and expectations of the school waned during the year, and, for example, one of the emotional issues about whether students should wear uniform moved toward becoming a non-issue. I lacked any great skill in communicating with them directly, and no very useful 'debates' occurred, but the prefects did increase in their desire to have me 'on-side'. The speech night addresses of the head prefects were unabridged and proved acceptable to the majority.

STAFF MEETINGS

The nature of the general staff meeting had to be changed. It takes at least 45 minutes to an hour to have any discussion of significance, and the staff had no experience of opportunities to discuss matters of substance about student learning, methods, use of time, the environment, and so on. Fewer, longer meetings were scheduled, at about three weekly intervals, and many registered their objection. The meetings began with a brief social gathering with coffee and sandwiches. The agenda (issued in advance) had three kinds of item. First there were general comments from the principal—a kind of 'state of the house' comment. Then some staff members were invited to describe something they were doing, to affirm their work, and to inform others about what was occurring in other faculties. Finally there was a theoretical, yet practical input, which was included to enable staff to discuss, understand and interpret various matters of educational interest.

The mood of the staff was interesting. If, in my general comments, I praised, the group gave no indication of a response, unless it was negative. If I admonished, the reaction was usually constructive, but unfriendly. Responses afterwards showed that there was considerable goodwill among the teachers.

The murmurings suggested that teachers had no interest in the work of other faculties. However, those asked to make a presentation, and especially those who taught 'low status' subjects, were obviously pleased to have the chance to show their wares, although they usually adopted an off-hand manner. Of course these reactions were an inescapable part of the process of change. The few comments which teachers made tended to indicate gaping ignorance about the school as a whole. This view was confirmed in many ways. The divisions among the teachers were reflected in patterns in the staff-rooms. Although the manner was not unfriendly, any 'outsider' who may have been invited to join a table was seldom admitted to the conversation. The craft staff always met separately, and appeared to take pleasure in their isolation.

Once a term, techniques which ensured anonymity were used to give teachers a chance to bring forward any organisational or administrative matter which was annoying them, and to make suggestions for improvements. Usually the staff members were divided into small groups which would sift out any ideas which were subsequently brought to the full meeting. Understandably, these meetings were not very successful at first. Anger was often not far below the surface, and, despite the strategies employed to separate suggestions from the person from whom it had originated, comments were usually politically safe and about the organisational structures and the nature of the task.

In an effort to relieve pressures, two initiatives were undertaken in this field. The first was a success, the second, a resounding failure. The first was a plan to give over a staff meeting to a tour of the school, when each department would give a brief input. Interest grew at each stopping place, and many volunteered that they had little idea of what other departments offered. One teacher admitted that, in over ten years, she had never ventured out of the main building. Like the students, the staff had their own taboos.

At this time, the staff rooms were the work rooms for most of the staff. Emptied of their function as work rooms, we were able to create a *single common room* in which staff could have fellowship. Only one teacher stoically continued to mark in the common room. Almost without exception, the teachers accepted the invitation to visit the common room at least once each day. As opportunity arose comfortable office space was created for each faculty. The faculty rooms were a great success—interaction of a professional kind increased dramatically, and eventually the cliques were broken up as teachers accepted the alternatives.

TENSION!

The second initiative fell more heavily than a lead balloon. A conference was planned to consider how best we could serve all students in the school. The staff had complained about the presence of large numbers of 'disinclined and disruptive' students and the low learning capacity of many youngsters. But there was little interest in tackling the problems. The idea of a staff conference was seen as a confrontation. The first symbol of objection was late arrival. It was not possible to see the opening film until well after the scheduled starting time, but with no discussion to follow, time was made up! The group discussions about various topics were a little more successful, though two groups spent their time 'defining the terms'. In the long term the conference proved useful, but the response was not designed to encourage the principal. One senior administrator told me he was convinced I was 'hell-bent on destroying the school'.

A group of teachers asked to hold a meeting of staff, because they were aware of 'considerable disquiet', and wanted to 'help'. I agreed, on condition that I could be present as a silent listener/observer. A halting start led to a young teacher defending me on the grounds that I was concerned for the students. She also expressed gratitude for the personal assistance she had received. This speech set the tenor of the remainder of the comments, some administered in the tone of grandfatherly and grandmotherly advice. If the desire to help was sincere, then that meeting was successful!

At about that time I had a visit from an inspector, sent from head office to investigate the reports of bad feeling among the staff. He could find neither large pockets of resentment nor pleasure during the period of his call. That the principal was aware of his difficulties was accepted, and the explanation he made was deemed to be reasonable. There was some evidence of support from the Education Department officers later that year, but no official comment or action followed the inquiry.

At the end of the year, few teachers sought to transfer, and those that did had reasons which I believe had nothing to do with their lot at Marion High School. Later, three or four senior people did leave in anger, but I feel no guilt, only sorrow about that outcome. It is my firm belief that if the action taken 'too quickly' that year had not been taken, the drop-out rate would have been much greater than it was. The plain fact was that the classroom was rapidly becoming a more pleasant place to be in. The professional freedom enjoyed by staff engendered confidence and appreciation as time went on.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

During the year we were able to improve the condition of many of the older classrooms. Holes in the walls were repaired, desks resurfaced, floor coverings (usually carpet) installed, and some painting was done to add freshness and colour.

FINAL COMMENT

We will never know whether any change would have been made by staff-based processes. But any conclusion is made even more hypothetical by the fact that I could not have accepted the elitist philosophy which prevailed at the time. While it favoured students with high academic competence, its worst aspect was its failure to see worth in those who did not perform well. As much as I wanted it to be different, I could never have been acceptable to those who were part of the more influential power block. It was a lonely year for the principal. I could not afford to have 'favourites', if my aims were to be achieved. During the year there were many who were ready to try to 'bridge the gap' and I shall always be grateful for their concern and generosity.

* * *

HISTORY

A student's view

The study of History is a most interesting exercise in fact-finding and learning. Documents, artefacts and even people are excellent sources with which to discover events in the life of the earth and its inhabitants.

Lives of people in History are one of the most important and enjoyable factors of previous life. The way people lived from era to era, varies immensely, and changes in lifestyles are reasons for the occurrence of events. The actions of people signify the way of life, which is an interesting topic in History.

From prehistoric times until modern today, the land, the people and the animals have undergone changes of one sort or another. Studies of different periods open new worlds to explore. New worlds of events and life always differ, giving variation and added interest.

Reasons for events in History are often complicated or unclear. Deciphering reasons is challenging and rewarding as has been studying History this year, 1983.

Peter Alldritt
Year 9

DUSK IN THE FLINDERS RANGES
(North Eastern)

The silence around the creek is haunting,
The mulgas sit fast, and the birds cease
taunting,
The Melaleukas sway silently,
And the ranges yonder, are a sight to see.
The cacase of a dead euro lies,
Then the silence is broken by the parrot's
cries.

Chris Medlin
Year 8

HONEST RESPONSES . . .

Year 8 Science

"The only thing I really enjoyed this year was the microscope. I found I could see things with my microscope that I didn't think were possible. Little bugs crawling in the pond slime. With my microscope I could see more due to the magnification. What I looked at most were the biology slides of the nerve fibres, intestines, taste buds, muscles and body cells. Some looked so vile you wouldn't want to look again. The one I found most interesting was the slide of the nerve fibres and cross-section of a blood vessel. I hope we use some more exciting things next year."

"I enjoyed this section of work the most. Why? do you ask. I liked learning about our five senses; hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. The exercises we did on our senses enabled me to know what they limited me to. I learnt to study things better and become aware of my senses. Some people take their senses for granted! Things we did that I enjoyed:

> *I liked it when we did the test tube exercise. We had to taste, touch and smell the liquids inside. Another thing I enjoyed was the memory games we played. The sense we used was sight. Going outside and writing everything that I noticed. Boy! what a list I had. Then we had to put them into two groups: Made by Dad, and Made by Manufacturers. Then we did a 'Am I A Good Observer' test. That was cool, we had to do all these observing tasks, on each section that there was. Nearly every sense was used! Next piece of work we did was rather scientific. We had to study the appearance of an animal, every possible one. I felt a bit like a scientist and my poor dog didn't really understand what I was doing".*

"I enjoyed the experiments with the bunsen burner the best of all. The best experiment in that section was the evaporation questions. I think that the experiment would be better if they involved more than one part per question, e.g. Place ten drops of water in an evaporating dish. Time how long it takes for the water to evaporate. Once this is completed, taste what remains on the inside of the dish. Write what you discover. Instead of two separate questions. I think these types are good because it involves two questions and two answers in the one question. I also like it because you are doing, or about to do two things, one after the other without a break. The only bad thing about this is that it involves more writing per question than any normal question, but that is to be expected".

In August I entered the Oliphant Awards and made a simulation game. I called it Lab Safety. It took me ages to make it. In September I had to go up in front of everyone and received a certificate. I was happy and would like to do it again.

. . . D. Collins

13

CURRICULUM AND THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

The Concept of Comprehensive Education

The concept of comprehensiveness, as we understood it at Marion, gave 'a new meaning' to the word 'comprehensive'. It was a meaning 'which was apparently quite different from many other secondary schools'. (Simper, a staff member, in a paper presented at the Australian Music Teachers Association Conference, 1983)

He suggested that 'the devolution of authority from education departments to the schools placed great pressure on the "comprehensive" idea'.

> Not only are many of our schools far from socially representative but given that they should be free within broad limits to work out details of their own approach to education, it is extremely unlikely that they could effectively accommodate the conflicting interpretations of education in the community that they are intended to serve'. (Crittenden, *Changing Ideas in Australian Education*, 1981, p.91)

Simper found that research had revealed a number of advantages in comprehensive schools. Comprehensive schools, he noted in summary,

- help to overcome problems of over specialisation at an early stage—particularly by allowing varied and flexible choices between courses (and year of study);
- attend more to children's needs, i.e. allow personal development and therefore foster a better student attitude towards school;
- give equality of access to students from various socio-economic backgrounds and contribute to increased cultural unity in the local community;
- allow a more meaningful deployment of resources—in particular of the teachers. (Simper, 1983)

There were disadvantages too, if efforts were not made to counteract them.

- The size of comprehensive schools—in terms of school population, administration and so on. The large schools tended to result from an additive pattern of organisation—i.e. an already large high school was given extra buildings and staff to cover the so called 'technical' or 'practical' areas of the curriculum.
- The tendency to end up with a smorgasbord of courses and the general pressure for these courses to reflect the need of bureaucracy and industry rather than being important in terms of our culture as a whole. (Simper, 1983)

Comprehensiveness is meant to be seen as multi-dimensional. It takes in all aspects of the learning context as well as content.

> A classroom [school] centred wholly on books is for the twentieth-century child as inappropriate as a factory centred wholly on individual hand craftsmanship . . . [A school totally committed to talk and chalk] will strike the child by contrast [with the world he experiences away from school] as an anachronism. (Cohen, 1983, p.31)

Hence considerable attention must be given to the ways each topic is presented and to making sure that the methods used are appropriate to the intellectual capacity and social backgrounds of the students. To ignore the third of our community who are not anglo-saxon, or to assume racial superiority or dominance, would be to disregard reality and the facts.

The school with a comprehensive programme believes in giving equal esteem to all learning. It makes no value distinctions between the social, vocational and leisure elements of whatever it offers, and it believes that different students may undertake an option for different reasons. It also seeks to engender genuine excitement into the learning experiences of every student.

The comprehensive school will also be concerned with care and social growth, the environment (see chapter 6 - 9), decisions and choices, and include some special events (see chapter 9 - 10).

While comprehensive education means more than wider subject choice and/or alternative courses, it is still convenient, with this broader concept in mind, to describe the content of the curriculum in terms of subjects. The school seeks to respond to the need of any identifiable group of students large enough to make a class group and to provide a structure that makes it possible for the students to select his own courses and subjects. Already this book has referred to the curriculum as having formal and informal elements, and being an amalgam of vocational, social and leisure components. It can also be described as having compulsory and optional areas. The compulsory part emerges as a kind of core, applicable to all students, adapted to the competence of each student, and sufficient in scope to keep all options open. The core includes mathematics and science, and the skills needed to enter leisure experience areas (called enrichment) up to the end of year 10 and English to the end of year 11. This is consistent with the Education Department's document—'Our Schools and their Purposes' (1981), which offers common study experiences and a choice from a range of general and specialist subjects. (See Section 7—'The eight areas of the curriculum', p.20)

BROAD ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME

In recent years the relevance of secondary school programmes has been called into question, usually with reference to a student's preparedness for the transition from school to work. With similar concern many statements suggest that students lack the skills they need for survival out in the world.

When the various elements (study areas) of student *needs* are considered, it is difficult to separate out a set of studies which are simply for 'career', 'social development', 'leisure time activity' or 'for survival', because what is career for one student, has leisure significance for another, and so on.

> When we address ourselves to considering what the school attempts to do by way of education of a student for a career, we are in danger, in the present job shortage context, of looking too narrowly at the school curriculum. If however, we accept that jobs are scarce, and in some areas scarcer than in others, that many, and probably most, jobs will be tedious, unrewarding and removed from the people the firm sets out to serve, or from decision making at any level, that a satisfied worker is one who finds satisfaction somewhere in life, if not in the job then away from it, and that workers of all kinds are concerned to add quality to their lives as well as to share in the nation's wealth, then our view of career education is almost as wide as that of education itself. At Marion High School we take the latter view but modify it to include some immediate elements of the first to the extent that some skill training has immediate transfer value to a number of job areas (e.g. commercial, design, woodwork, metalwork—i.e. trade areas) or is prerequisite to entry to some further course of study. (Hannaford, cited in Cole, 1979, p.154)

In reacting to an early attempt by OECD to identify the skills basic to a student's survival, we noted that attention was being directed only at young people with very limited ability. The author suggested that the investigation should examine the skills and knowledge needed by individuals of all intellectual capacities to operate (survive effectively) in our new and increasingly technological society. A report by OECD, (1979) emerged which filled out the common elements of a broad curriculum structure, and took note of an individual's potential to gain through exploration and extension. These elements were described under several broad headings:

Intellectual Competences—reasoning, 'commonsense'
The Ability to Learn
Personal and Social Skills
Knowledge of the World of Work
Competences in Surviving and Developing in Employment
Literacy—reading, writing, speaking and listening
Numeracy
Manual Dexterity
Elementary Technology
Competences in Finding a Job
Health and Safety

(A sub-set for those students at the lower end of the intellectual continuum—the mentally disadvantaged—will emphasise survival within a society which operates with higher intellectual demands upon its citizens than these persons are capable of.)

View of Parents

The views of the parents and general public add to the range of content matters which should be considered. For example, Botsman and Browne (1977) listed possible curriculum items which the public thought were highly important:

Health Education including First Aid
A Sense of Right or Wrong
History, Geography or Social Studies
Human Relationships
Wise Buying Habits
An Understanding of Family Life
About Government, the Political Parties and Voting Procedures
Alcohol Education
Drug Education
Help students understand the Rights and Duties of Citizenship

Sometimes the emphases sought by a section of the public are local in character, for example, 'Studies about the Sea' for students who live near the sea, 'Agriculture and Animal Husbandry' in rural areas, 'Tourism' in tourist areas, and so on.

The more specific items given prominence by members of the community are usually included within the more general terms favoured by educators, but their concerns can sharpen teacher awareness of items which have special relevance. (Several subjects were included at Marion after they had been suggested by a member of the school community.)

The old way of approaching curriculum was to group subjects under the following headings: English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Crafts, and to expect every student to take representative subjects from each category up to the end of the tenth year of schooling. Some reference was usually made to extra-curricular subjects and experience subjects as good things to be included after the requirements of the course 'proper' had been attended to. There were echoes of compulsory sport from the English public schools in this dimension. Now rather battered by the refusal of some students to co-operate at sports, the annual musical and the speech night plays have earned grudging recognition for music and drama as subjects in their own right. Social considerations were usually taken for granted, but some kind of pastoral care was expected.

Pluralism in our society, greater participation in technical occupations, different aptitudes, interests and abilities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, aspirations and life styles, learning styles and degrees of necessary support and even poor work opportunities for young people, all press the genuinely comprehensive secondary school to break down all possible barriers by recognising equal esteem among subjects, methods, approaches, environmental contexts and forms of reporting and accreditation. While the senior secondary school helps young people weather the eruptions of their adolescence, rigour and standards must be preserved alongside information and counsel. The school must also be prepared to accept student decisions to change their intellectual groupings. The rapidity of change in society makes the task difficult because the delicate relationship of motivational factors with environmental pressures must be kept in balance as growth continues to be fostered and nurtured.

Students' rates of progress are unlikely to be completely predictable. Intellectual growth will continue at different rates among the disciplines and erratically within each subject area throughout the secondary years and beyond. But whatever the mix which determines the eventual outcome, 'the obstinacy of individual differences and the relative stability of the general cognitive level, means that education must take a realistic view of what can be achieved while never abandoning hope for the less able adopting a deterministic view of ability'. (Wall, 1977, p.25) Intellectual growth accompanies development in the physical, social and emotional lives of adolescents. A genuinely open comprehensive system, such as Marion has steadfastly attempted to establish, would seem to offer the greatest likelihood of reconciling individual and social needs, so long as the worst elements of comparative judgements are replaced by genuine attempts to make the best of every student.

The Marion model conceived that after a student had been introduced to the full range of subject families and put in possession of the introductory skills for each, comprehensiveness should gradually change its emphasis from the broad ranging experiences of year 8 to free choice from the widest possible range of subjects, levels of study and teaching modes.

An Approach

It follows that during the senior years, students, as individuals, will have one or more of three criteria to enable them, out of the broad scope of their attributes, to establish their own priorities among the syllabuses of the subjects which have been made available. These criteria are,

- special interest in a subject's content for its own sake
- the subject's contribution to general development as part of liberal studies
- the subject's potential to be part of an introduction to a course for some job or cluster of jobs

Marion found the following list of headings a convenient checklist of subject families:

English (language and literature)
Traditional Maths. and Sciences
Traditional Humanities and Foreign Languages
Business Studies
Technical and Technological Studies
Studies in Human Care
Studies with Local Significance
The Performing Arts, Art and Design

Our experience showed the importance of offering a genuine choice to students. Around the world, I have visited many schools who list a large number of subjects, but when the prospectus is examined closely, those actually taught are much fewer, or various restraints may give any one student very little choice. In many cases, some subjects may not be available to girls. Traditional disciplines are kept for the most intelligent. Subjects are arranged in separate groups with no overlap allowed, and so on.

Many schools only float those subjects which have more than a fixed minimum number of students. The Education Department has suggested the number 15. (Department of Further Education uses 12.) They argue that a proliferation of subjects for the senior school inevitably leads to large classes in the junior school. While the argument has substance, the focus on small classes misses the essential point that over-sized classes should be avoided right across a school. In 1982, Marion was severely criticised for offering a long list of subjects, while nearby schools which offered a much narrower range of subjects were praised for their good sense. However, no effort was made to examine the matrix of class sizes across both schools. In that comparison, Marion showed up well.

In year 12 in 1983 we offered students the opportunity to do up to five subjects from our different kinds of courses:

- Public Examinations Board
- Secondary Schools Certificate
- Our own Internal course
- Any combination of the above 3.

Subjects offered were:

[Public Examinations Board (PEB)]

English
Mathematics 1 and 2
Mathematics IS
Physics
Chemistry
Biology
Geology
Geography
Australian History
Classical Studies
Modern European History
American History
Economics
Art
Drama
Music
French
German
Japanese
Ethnic Languages

[Secondary Schools Certificate (SSC)]

English
Biology
Applied Physics
Geography
Australian History
Contemporary World History
Australian Economics
Art
Design
Music
Home Economics
Technical Studies
Advanced Stenography
Social Science
Business Mathematics
Applied Mathematics
Special Physical Education
Drama
Ethnic Languages

[Internal Course]

- English
- Business Mathematics
- Applied Mathematics
- Business Typing & Pitman Script
- Drama
- Commercial Studies
- Building Technology A and B
- Metals Technology A and B
- Power Mechanics
- Applied Physics
- Food & Catering
- Food Technology
- Special Physical Education

To Matriculate, a student did five subjects from the PEB courses.

Enrichment: As well, all students spent four lessons a week at enrichment activities which consisted of *either* Leadership Training in nearby primary schools, *or* Inside Work Experience (work in faculty areas within the school), *or* Two one-term courses selected from the enrichment courses listed for year 11.

Year 12 students who needed remedial work in any subject could take a *Booster* course in that subject instead of an enrichment activity.

The public scandal about small classes led to numbers of surveys and district conferences, where ways of eliminating small classes was a wrong item on a largely pointless agenda. Clustering of schools was suggested, but it proved to be impractical except perhaps at the very edges. In the event small French, German, and mathematics classes would survive when bigger, though relatively small, numbers of students were available for subjects like technical studies, business mathematics, local geography, dance and drama. Thus the introduction of studies which were more relevant to needs of many students was delayed.

In a bid to broaden the curriculum teachers might be tempted to build up new programmes which have little relevance to the needs of the students. Faculties might vie for students by making a variety of offerings, only to find that the numbers game favours the less industrious and more traditional faculties, both of which offer a smaller number of subjects.

More recently long lists of semester-length or term-long units or subjects have become fashionable: commonly up to 80% of the students fail to get to study all of their choices, and have to make new choices, only to find that many subjects they might have chosen are no longer available because the classes have already been filled. While a wider curriculum across the system might be the outcome, and indeed a desirable one, the practice of asking students to choose their course from a single list of subjects is highly undesirable because, through practical constraints, it fails to support the objective of open student choice. The less able are usually the ones who are penalised.

Students are far less likely to plan to continue at school if the school will not (cannot) give a clear unequivocal undertaking to teach classes formed around appropriate offerings. Who from the middle range wants to risk certain failure in a matriculation examination class? It is necessary to present these students with expectations which enable them to plan for a successful future. That may mean some small classes at first. It will also mean different methods and new kinds of assessment.

For these reasons the mechanics of the processes by which the subjects list can be lengthened are described in some detail in a separate chapter about school organisation (chapter 23). By building the list around the broad spectrum of the interests and needs of students, any school of whatever size can reduce the risk of not gaining economical numbers and guarantee that it will teach the subject range it offers.

Differences among people and changing contents of the subject disciplines will inevitably lead to the introduction of new subjects, revision of old syllabuses or rejection of a subject no longer supported. Need and maybe even popular fashion will keep the curriculum in a constant state of flux. In this book we have taken the position that natural diversity makes it the right of students to make as many decisions and choices as possible. We have established a curriculum principle—students are required to undertake a comprehensive survey of all subject families in years 8 - 9, but from year 8, we included several options which become more accessible each year. On occasion we introduced our own syllabuses (e.g. various technologies and business/applied mathematics for students from among those with middle ability) wherever there were serious gaps.

Once a decision has been made (through a survey, a private suggestion, a new social factor or whatever) to introduce a subject it becomes necessary to find or develop a syllabus. Usually there is help to be found somewhere—it is easier and more secure to use or adapt an existing syllabus because the preparation of a syllabus from the beginning is very difficult and time consuming, even when the required knowledge and skill are available. However, there is seldom anything absolute about the syllabus outline. What is presented should be determined with the students who will take the subject in mind. The level or levels of study, the various approaches which are suitable, and the appropriate assessment procedures can then be established. The difficulties surround the ways and means needed to interpret the syllabus so that the material is meaningful and challenging for all of a group of students who may vary considerably in ability.

Once these things have been decided we can give consideration to such matters as the space required, furniture, equipment, materials and their cost, and to finding a teacher with the qualifications needed to teach the subject. It may be advisable to introduce the teacher to another person with suitable expertise, and to encourage some form of a support structure. Since the preparation load will be heavy at first, the teacher should be allotted time for that purpose, both before and during the year the subject is introduced—a small number of full days free of other obligations is usually more useful than a so-called lighter load.

As I have moved about schools, I have often seen evidence of pitched battles, which have little to do with the diverse needs of students, about subjects to be offered in the curriculum. They are about teachers trying to protect their own territory by forcing students to take or not take their subject. A responsible educator-leader would take steps to prevent this unprofessional behaviour happening.

Sometimes the organisation deliberately favours a pressure group. Protected subjects (science, mathematics and English must be included) may not be as well taught as they should be, because there is no motivation to make their students responsive, growing learners. It makes good sense to offer these subjects as choices after year 9. Most students, approximately 87%, 93% and 97% respectively in my experience, will opt to take these subjects. Ironically, given the choice, teachers afterwards tend to agree with the student's decision not to take the subject—in other words, they don't want them in their subject anymore than the students want (or need) to be there.

Marion has included some semester subjects and some term-long experience subjects for a decade, and we saw no virtue in adopting one course-length universally when the timetable could accommodate all of the alternatives we had in mind.

Marion has been criticised in recent years, first for the length of its list, and more recently for its brevity! But the real test should not have been whether the school had the longest or shortest list of subjects in its prospectus, but focus on how efficiently we used staff and other resources to gain the the highest possible level of learning among the student body. The subjects we offered were only one factor in a policy which was rewarded by higher achievement, better co-operation, and a more purposeful atmosphere.

The pattern by which the curriculum was offered was a first step toward individualising each student's learning programme. Several chapters contribute to the theme that a sense of responsibility for their own education should be a major outcome of the school years for all students. We sought to distance ourselves from the possibility of criticism that we were only paying lip-service to student development and self-actualisation. Once students become young adults, probably during their fifteenth year, other considerations over-ride such well argued preserves as compulsory 'core' curriculum, balanced courses, logical step-by-step development and other well meant controls. Interestingly, as the young people move through the upper school years, characteristically they are prone to take steps willingly and purposefully to redress any imbalances or omissions that their earlier choices may have created.

An Exceptional Area of Concern—Leisure Time

We have already mentioned a concern to provide students with a number of skills and experiences which they might carry out into their leisure hours. By and large schools have left these considerations to the extra-curricular area, not to be allowed to interfere with the 'serious' business of vocational preparation.

The advocates of a liberal education imply a wider whole-of-life benefit for most studies but matters like certification, and the use that employers attach to the examination results, have created an emphasis upon job-getting potential. Hence, while say geography might be studied by students for its general values or as the beginning of preparations for a career as a geographer, they are more likely to see it as a subject needed to make up the number for a certificate with job-winning value. Hence a 'leisure' outcome cannot be assumed.

Preparation for Leisure

Few schools in my experience regard preparation for leisure as important, yet an examination of many of our most pressing social problems reveals that they have their roots in the 'boredom' syndrome which grows out of people's inability to use their uncommitted time constructively or with satisfaction to themselves. Few seem to appreciate that the average working week for people under twenty-five is currently little more than twenty hours per week and becoming shorter.

Middle-class parents often push their young children into leisure groups—ballet, sports teams, social clubs—yet few are able or willing to regard these opportunities as formative. Concerns to keep their young children out of mischief or elitist ambitions seem to be common motives of the parents with apparent disregard for the later years! If leisure activity is to emerge from the subjects of serious study, then three things are necessary:

- the possibilities of its application as a leisure time activity need emphasis
- the tempo of the study must be the tempo of leisure interest, with much more time given to exploration and experience
- the activity must be enjoyable

Since people are often alarmed if children are enjoying school, parental attitudes are likely to discourage schools from providing leisure training. In fact, students might have guilt feelings about participating. Most school people and parents will tend to argue that there is not time to introduce young people to leisure activities inside the school day. Yet a sense of direction or a talent that is dormant can come from these short courses. They can also encourage students to become more self-directed and inventive. At Marion we gave about 15% of time (10% in years 11 and 12) over to leisure preparation, and most agreed that youngsters' involvement in these activities led to better outcomes from their 'serious' studies.

In years 8 and 9, students were given time to have a range of experiences and gather numbers of elementary (beginner) skills under the subject titles of crafts, typing, music, art, drama and physical education. Social education, additional sporting (physical) skills (year 10) and opportunities to experience and develop leadership roles (years 11, 12) were added later. From year 10 leisure preparation time was also used to introduce up to eight different activities—'courses' up to a term in length. The rules around choice were designed to encourage students to undertake new things, some not immediately appealing. Like the new icecream flavour, they would not know whether they liked it until they had tried it. Most acknowledged that the experience, even when rejected, was worth having.

Our rationale was based on evidence that people are more likely to take up an activity (or join a group) if they know a little about it and have a rudimentary mastery of the beginner skills. Our research into one area (acceptance of leadership opportunities) showed an increase from 26 to 173 while the senior enrolment dropped from 600 to 450. While no attempt was made to discover any hidden changes to the number of opportunities which were available, the result was at least encouraging.

The different atmosphere of the groups and the evaluation which was heavily biased towards participatory attitude indicators like attendance, industry, willingness to co-operate, creativity, initiative, reliability and interest, did encourage satisfaction and reward. More than 70% of students acknowledged a level of satisfaction (enjoyment) accompanied each enrichment experience and few wanted 'enrichment' discontinued.

For some students, gratification of having done something without a standardised 'quality' tag gave them an insight to life which they would not otherwise have had.

Of course students' future leisure pursuits will not be limited to these experiences. They may arise out of their subjects or through other avenues, like the interests of a friend. Enrichment emphasized however that well spent leisure is an important part of living.

* * *

DANCE

The one thing that has helped me to face the future about careers is dancing, which I take at school.

Before I had started to do dancing here I didn't have a clue about what dancing involves, and how hard it really is.

It has shown me that to make a success of something, for example a performance, you must be perfect and have practised for hours. Doing jobs half-heartedly is not good enough. It has shown me the pain involved if I want to make it to the top, and the hard competition I must face.

Heather Macgregor
Year 11

DESIGN

The only real success I've had at Marion High is the time when, due to activities associated with Design, I won a free, two-week course in the sport of S.C.U.B.A. diving.

A competition was organized by the Nautical Archaeological Association of South Australia which was looking for an appropriate logo for letterheads and T-shirts.

Much to my amazement I won the S.C.U.B.A. course and, after two weeks of theory and practical work, I had learnt to S.C.U.B.A. dive and to enjoy it. I may continue with further advanced S.C.U.B.A. courses and learn to explore new underwater environments, and it could even open up new job opportunities. It will also come in handy if I ever drop my watch "in the drink" while canoeing.

Robert Gomer
Year 11

TO THE ARTIST

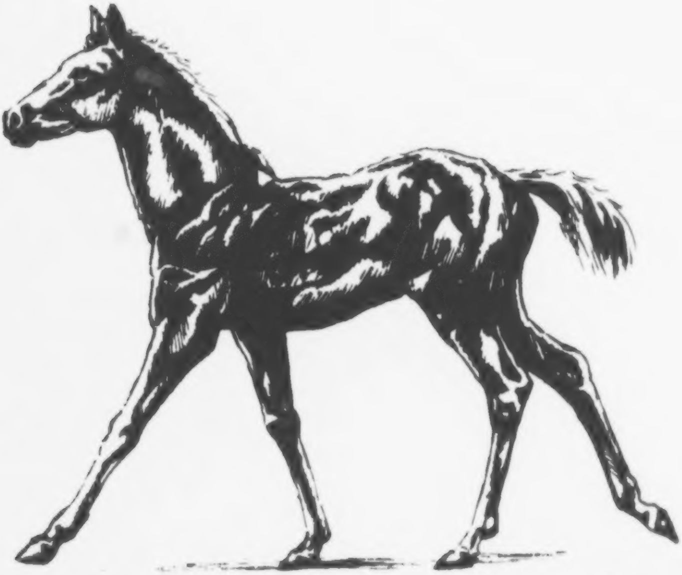
World of beauty, how shall I portray thee?
Sweet and gentle, life so mellow and soft?
With fire and stone, heat bursting with terror,
And flames that seek to envelop then flee?

The tension and grace of sinew and bone,
An artist's delight and dilemma come
The joy and splendour of the newborn foal,
Muscles stretch taut, my awe stands not alone

God's world to capture must be seen in real,
For the mind may conjure but not create
And tender the odour the artist must feel,
Nature and her beauty he must contemplate

The work of the man springs forth from his world,
His heart is the source from which both unfurl

David Lawruk
Year 12



BUILDING TECHNOLOGY

The course that Mr. Smith has put us through is very good because we are not doing the same old thing. He has got us to do our projects at a high standard and we are working from an existing apprenticeship course. We don't always do projects that we keep, we often go out and build cupboards for someone and then fit them.

In this class I have learnt many things in the timber trade. With some of the things that I have learnt it has helped me and my father in his new house. The other day I showed my father how to set and sharpen a plane.

Michael Barker
Year 11

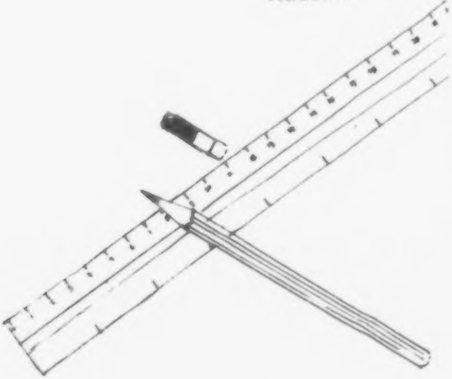
I have gained the skills on the Line 4 subject to help prepare me for a trade, or if I would want, an apprenticeship when I would leave school. I have learnt how the apprenticeship system works, as we have done modules similar to the ones the apprentices take to prepare them for the kind of work they will have to do. We can choose, unlike in the metals and plastics trades, the type of wood, colour and strength, so as to make the best of what is available to us.

Peter Wiszniewski
Year 11

I have developed many new skills which I would never have taken on as a major subject, and have enjoyed doing so.

I have developed various skills in various areas like being able to do Technical Drawing, Metalwork, Electricity, Photography. I have also developed my own problem-solving skills by making a windmill and a solar-powered hot-water service.

Two Year 12 S.S.C.
students



MOTOR MECHANICS

I went for the entrance exam for an Apprentice Motor Mechanic down at the North Gate.

There were about sixty to seventy people there, and seven or eight were girls. As you walked in you knew that the guys were watching you as if it was 'not allowed'. The examination itself was pretty easy, but most of the girls were on one table, alienated from the guys.

The Mechanics teacher at school helped a lot even though at first he didn't want girls in his class. He soon changed his tune when he found that the girls were willing to work. If it hadn't been for him I probably would not have thought of trying for the apprenticeship.

Hilary Baxter
Year 11

I feel that I have benefitted from my participation in the Da Vinci programme as it enabled me to gain an insight into Motor Mechanics, a subject that has captured my interest since I first started at Marion High School. Prior to Da Vinci I didn't have the motivation or opportunity to look at transmissions in depth, and researching the topic has widened my eyes to the positive and negative aspects of the automatic and manual transmissions.

Instead of merely skimming through volumes of mechanical jargon I had to go a step further and become familiar with, and have a greater understanding of, the steps involved in modification. During the time that I used for research I consulted a mechanic and inquired into the possibilities of eliminating slipping gears and other problems concerning an automatic. Altogether I feel that I have widened my knowledge in this area and would like to extend it into some courses in the near future.

In addition I now have a basic understanding of cars and feel confident in my ability to overcome problems concerning my own.

Sally Brock
Year 10

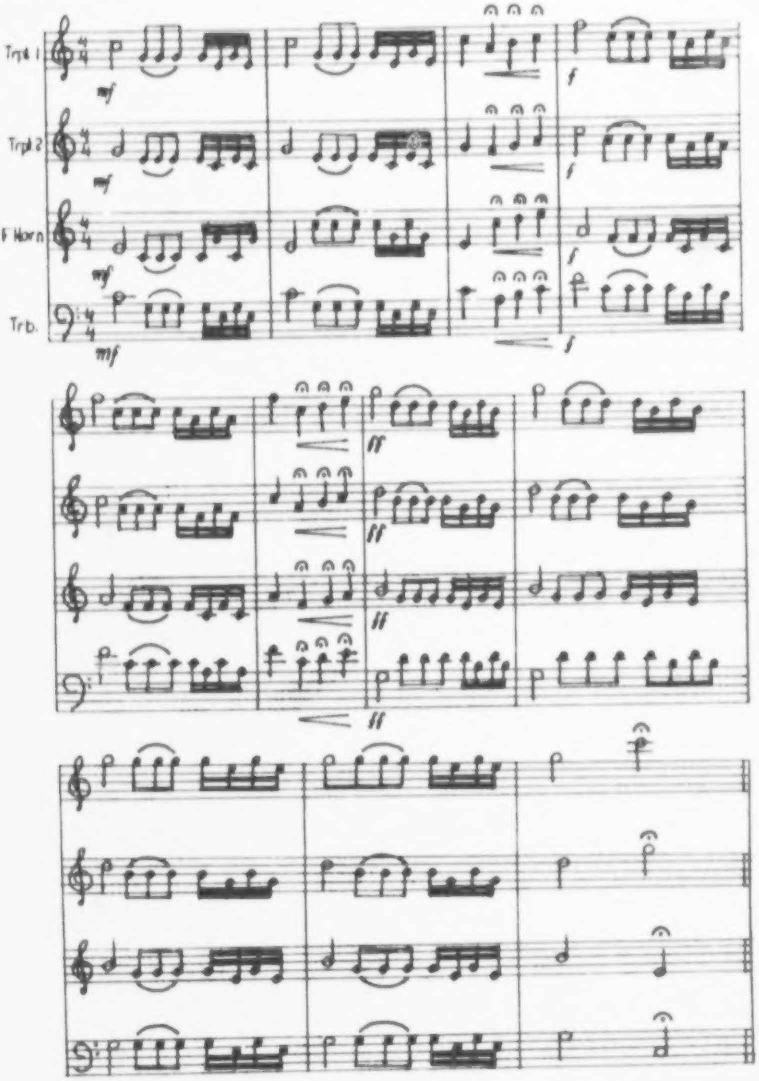
GYMNASTICS . . .

Gymnastics is a very good sport to do
It needs a lot of determination.
I get a lot of fun out of doing gymnastics,
The competitions are challenging and rewarding.
You start from the basic floor exercise,
Forward roll to a double twisting somersault.
You work from level 1 to level 10.
Level 10 is the Olympic level.
Gymnastics has been around almost from the
beginning of time.
I hope that gymnastics goes to the end of time.
P.S. I'm hoping to get to level 10.

Steven Tilley
Year 10

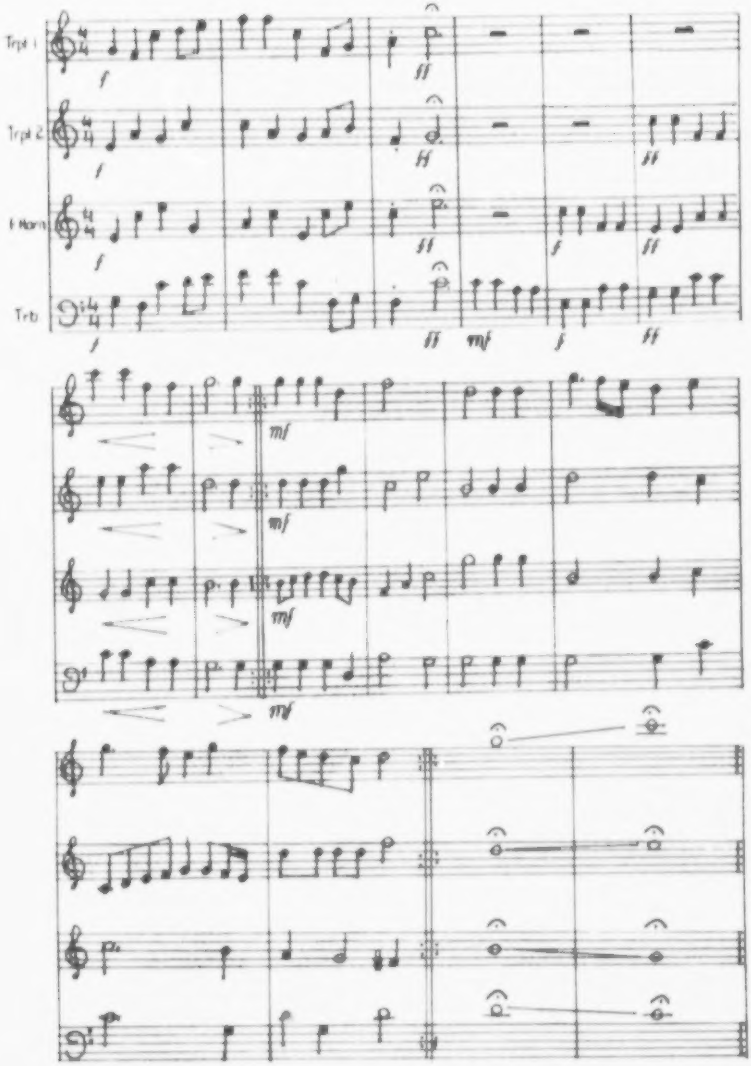
SUITE FOR BRASS QUARTET

1. Fanfare

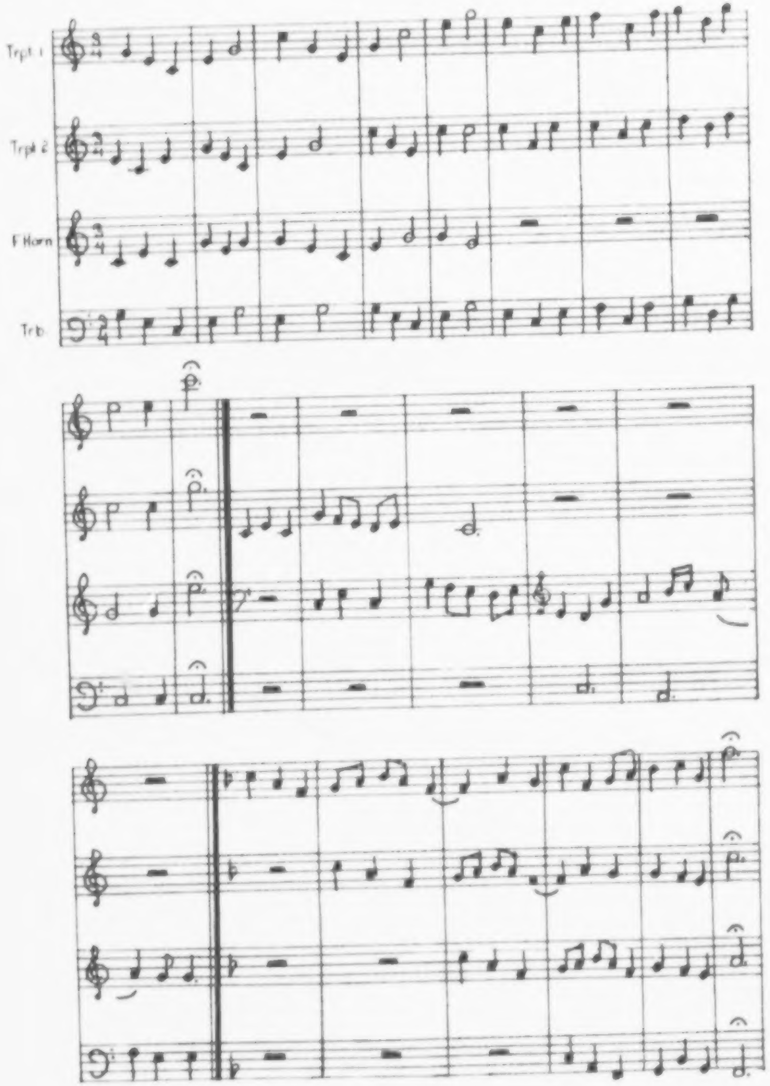

Trpt 1
Trpt 2
F Horn
Trb.
mf
f
ff

by Sam Davis
& Eliot McDonald

2. Pavane


Trpt 1
Trpt 2
F Horn
Trb
f
ff
mf

3. Gaillarde


Trpt 1
Trpt 2
F Horn
Trb.

DRAMA

From my Log Book

ALBATROSS—*"The albatross flies great distances*
over the oceans. When it lands it
is clumsy and vulnerable"

The final take—we do it for the last time!

Saturday, 14th May, evening

It was strange arriving at the good old Little Theatre at night, without already having done one performance on that day. It was, in a way, almost disturbing to think "This is the last time we'll arrive, ready to perform!" And then, "This is the last time I'll get ready for the funeral" I felt very I suppose sad is the only way to describe it, before the performance. For some reason we all felt like giving each other hugs and kisses, and there was a feeling of "Give it all you can for the last night"

In the wings the five of us thought about our moments together, waiting to go on. In the past week we had been nervous, excited, depressed, tired, frustrated and anxious together. We took turns in peeking out of the door. The moderator was there early this time—but as we'd already been through it once before, it didn't seem to be so much of an ordeal. Handshake/hug for the final time. The lights faded. The opening chord was struck.

The audience was great! once again, and I felt great! once again. They were perhaps more rowdy than last night's audience, and most of the jokes were directed towards the Naracoorte mob, who revelled in their participation. They really seemed to enjoy themselves.

The whole audience was applause happy! (They clapped after the funeral?!) It was lovely, but a bit distracting at times. It was a more difficult performance because there had to be a lot more improvisation than usual, due to the eagerness of the audience (mainly the Naracoorte lot!) to join in. The lullaby was turned almost upside down when Carina sat on a male knee—the owner of which refused to let her go! I don't know why she sat on his knee in the first place—she doesn't usually. Though it was obviously very funny (I laughed just as much as everyone else!) Dare I suggest that she did it to satisfy her own ego? But I feel everyone did a fantastic job just to cope with the different situations created by the audience.

Interval—we realised that it wasn't quite as good as last night's performance, though it was coming pretty close. There was a definite feeling of excitement though it was slightly subdued with the thought that it was our last time. I kept thinking, "That's the last time I'll do that", "That's the last time I'll wear that dress", "That's the last time I'll gel my hair", etc. We were all pleased to hear that the moderator had been laughing a lot!

The rest of the night was super and our curtain call was a pretty emotional time for us all. I drank in the applause, and in the dressing rooms there was just a mass of people hugging and kissing. MAF went around congratulating everyone, and I felt so much warmth towards him at that moment that I could have hugged him—but I restrained myself as I didn't think it was quite the right thing to do.

It was funny, because I didn't feel as upset as I was before the show.

With a message that my 'victim' wanted to see me (it was the last night and I'd never before taken up my proposition of meeting my 'victim'—so I decided to be daring and make the most of it!) I went on stage to be confronted with the entire Naracoorte mob. We joked around for a couple of minutes, and then a few of the others came up as well. It was nice to know that they enjoyed "Albatross" so much that they wanted to speak to us. It was lovely!

> " *It took ages to pack up all of my gear, and the dressing rooms were a mess! I was still around when most had left and the Little Theatre seemed deserted. It was a really strange feeling. In the movies, when there is the soppy music of some past experience and a person walking alone, I usually feel it is unrealistic. But it was amazing how much like the movies it felt. With the audience gone, the things being packed up, no longer the prospect of another performance, the atmosphere was quite different. Just like the movies, I could almost hear the music of "Fly My Albatross", feel the excitement, and see particular scenes flash through my mind. It sounds corny but that's just what it was like for me. I left the Little Theatre for the last time with arms full of my gear, and a last look at the photos in the foyer.* "

Sonya Feldhoff
Year 12

14

METHODOLOGY AND THE USE OF CLASS TIME

This chapter discusses a corollary of levelling. The success motive of the school was set by the distinctions which were made between the various levels of study, and the belief that all students were embarked upon an upward intellectual trail. Each definition of a level implied a specific set of do's and don'ts for the teacher. The study context for students at the lower level required direct contact with the content of the study— practical work, field and situational studies, activity. However, while these approaches may not be so compelling for the more able classes, the evidence favours them at all levels. Cohen (1983), puts the case for discovery or problem-solving techniques of teaching:

> It is the notion of discovery, perhaps more than anything else, which places the learner at the centre of the educational stage. Discovery is a stirring concept, evoking on the one hand, the hard respectability of scientific progress—useful, enlarging knowledge, solving pressing human problems; and, on the other hand, the adventurousness of human exploration . . . peopled by unpredictable terrors and dangers. Education conceived in this way becomes both an adventure in itself and also something with guaranteed effective results. (Cohen, 1983, p. 53)

The discovery method does not depend upon the students stumbling upon something relevant and interesting. The objectives must be very clear in the minds of the teachers, and they must be purposefully pursued. But, the teachers must also be keen to pose problems and explore situations for the sake of the motivation this approach brings and for the superior quality of the learning— the facts and the experiences stay fixed in the mind—advantages that must be set against systematic study and the sheer weight of some syllabuses.

The latter pressures, must not be allowed to become a reason for abandoning 'discovery' for two main considerations:

> First that the problem grows out of the experience being had in the present, and that it is within the range of the capacity of students; and secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas. (Dewey, cited in Cohen, 1983, p.62)

In this context, students are more likely to own what they study, and to make independent enquiries. At whatever level a student might be at the time,

> from a social, psychological and educational point of view . . . self-direction, self-expression, and autonomy express important values—not to be pursued without restraint, but not to be abandoned either. (Cohen, 1983, p.72)

In any age, it is imperative that the activities of the classroom give students opportunities to satisfy their individual needs for self-fulfilment and for identification of themselves as persons of worth. But, this apart, the students sense that, through methods which involve them in activity and personal discovery, they achieve learning which has more universal significance. Piaget claims that without the child's active participation, little learning can occur.

> All learning is at once assimilative and accommodative . . . it is possible to distinguish three modes of learning . . . operative learning is in play whenever the child's intelligence is actively engaged by the materials . . . some aspects of reality cannot be reconstructed or rediscovered to any great extent and must be largely copied [figurative learning] . . . in order to remember something . . . [the student] must be able to record it in the first place . . . connotative learning is the child's effort to make sense out of [the] world. (Elkind, 1976, pp. 112 - 116)

While a detailed study of the methods employed by teachers is not appropriate to this volume, wide-ranging cognitive and personal needs of students are sufficient reason to establish that the ways syllabuses are presented is at least as vital as concern for the content, and that neither content nor method should be considered without the other.

As Marion sought to improve the learning environment for its students, it often found that the willingness and ability of students to learn were closely related to the range of techniques which the teachers employed, and the atmosphere in which the learning was expected to occur.

Starting at a point determined by information supplied to us by their primary schools, performance levels and individual interests would be established during year 8. Subject, level, topic and resources would determine the mix of techniques which would be used to teach each subject. Some of the year 8 work would be designed to give the children the basic skills they would need to make meaningful selections of leisure activities (art, craft, dance, drama, music, physical education). Here the main criterion would be interest which would often be determined by whether the children had the skills they needed to allow satisfying achievements to occur.

Priorities among the objectives at each level would vary and they would have an influence on the techniques applied, e.g. basic geography would be taught with interest and skills as primary objectives. On the other hand, advanced geography students would want to develop a body of knowledge of their own and use it to understand relationships.

Tom, Susan, Maria and John all began in year 8 at Marion High School together at the beginning of a year. They were very different from one another in personality, interests, cultural background, home opportunities, expectations, aptitudes and abilities. Let us follow them through the school.

Tom is bright. He came from a middle-class home and he had been taught to expect that school would lead him to a tertiary course and a profession. His parents had applied for him to take a special foreign language option which would give him experience in two languages, French or German and Japanese, during year 8. His parents had rejected the possibility of special music or special drama. ('special' means 'additional time allotment' in year 8 at the expense of some lessons in other subjects.) In any case, Tom will relish the extra challenge of the special language class. He will probably have greater faith in traditional teaching/learning than any other approach by his teachers, yet the model he prepares for a geography project will reveal intense interest and mastery of the principles.

Susan is not bright. In her home, it is difficult to do much homework. When she was young her mother had no time to read to her, or hear her read. Hence her poorer ability (cf.Tom) had led to even poorer performance because of her lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Further, in primary school, her project work was never praised because it lacked evidence of a commitment of an abundance of time and she had few resources to draw from. Hence, she was not as keen on school as she should have been, but she was keen to please and she longed for recognition. Instead of foreign language study she will have special help with her basic English language need. For all her basic studies she will be in a smaller group to enable her to receive more individual support. Her teachers will use approaches which are a more flexible mix of small-group formal instruction and individual progression.

Maria is a bright girl with a non-English-speaking background. Her parents are keen for her to study her native tongue, the language used at home, but Maria wants to be like the others in the class who are good at reading, writing and speaking English. Her enthusiasm is catching and her teachers are ready to help her when her English lets her down. Later she will take up her native language and culture, but now, in year 8, the emphasis is upon improving her English.

John is an 'average' boy. His father thinks he will be a carpenter. John does not like bookish learning, but he is keen about his craft work, especially the practical work. John's mother would like him to make a new attempt to master all subjects, but John waits for the field studies, projects, and practical assignments before he shows any real interest. Hence, he learns best by field approaches and teaching that recognises his willingness and capacity to learn in practical situations. He is not much good at abstraction and probably will never do much reasoning except as a concrete thinker whose manner of thinking employs objects and images of objects rather than the words that represent the objects.

Thus our quartet demonstrates two continua of approach. First, the continuum of learning performance ranges from working totally in the abstract to working almost totally in a practical context (advanced, credit, standard, modified and basic). At the practical end, any abstraction, e.g. mathematical processes, will be learned by rote and be applied to concrete examples. The other continuum of learning environments and techniques is similar, but it ranges from traditional (bookish and academic) teaching methods, through more individual flexible teaching, to field methods and bridging programmes which cross subject boundaries, use observation and first-hand experience, and emphasise immediate relevance. Our four children will all benefit from a learning environment which uses the full extent of both continua, but the efficient, most appropriate mix will differ for each of them. Any assumption that intelligence and traditional academic learning should always be matched clearly is shown to be false.

The four children are all members of one homestead, made up of ninety children and six teachers. During the week they are members of several subgroups which give them more nearly the most suitable learning mix of approaches. Socially they have an opportunity to complement each other as a small community and they would have learned and experienced that social conflicts, social hierarchy, and social harmony are not based on intelligence ranking.

Let us continue to follow our four children, now year 10 students. (Some options which are open to years 10, 11 and 12 could aptly be described as courses, rather than subjects).

Tom chose a traditional academic group of subjects all of which he studied at advanced or credit level. For enrichment he again chose the more academic options, except for one period when he took photography. He saw the latter more as a hobby, and the skills he learnt in years 8 and 9 will enable him to experience success and to progress during the six-week course. During years 11 and 12 he will continue to concentrate upon a science-biased course and decide on either English or Japanese to complete his five subject year 12 course.

Susan has selected a group of subjects which reads like that chosen by scores of others (English, science, geography, business mathematics, home economics, art and drama). She studied English and business mathematics at the basic level, but her thoroughness and persistence enabled her to perform at higher levels in other subjects. She loved art and drama, and was quick to talk about what she was *doing* in those subjects. Drama has helped her gain confidence in herself and she is much more articulate than she used to be. Her reading and written expression have improved, but she has chosen to spend part of her language study time at a special programme (in the learning centre) designed to help her with those aspects of all of her subjects. She has also been exposed to a strongly supportive social environment in her homestead. We were able to arrange for her to go to the study camp at the school site at Cape Jervis, where she was especially commended for the quality of her participation. Her project work is immaculate and detailed because she comes to school early to use the resources of the learning centres. She has reason to be very proud of the model she made to illustrate a physical phenomenon which arose in her geography course.

Susan has done well enough to usefully enter year 12. She has developed sufficient self-esteem to want to do further training. She is working with intellectually disabled children, and supporting that option with three subjects for the secondary school certificate, now SAS or school assessed subjects. (Some of her peers have stayed on, too, and all are highly regarded in one or other of the social science tutor-options.)

Maria has accepted the chance to study her native language. She is ready to identify with her cultural background and she has most willingly contributed on appropriate occasions. Her English is now good enough for her to be suffering no disadvantage among other students. This has bolstered her confidence and made her more able to blend her cultural background with the more typical Australian life pattern. Her community language lessons are held outside normal school hours, but she has 'lesson time' to do her homework, or whatever. Her other subjects are drawn from the general offerings and all other aspects of her school life follow the mainstream pattern. Maria aspires to matricultate. Her native language may be one of her subjects, but because she will have mastered English by year 12, the range of subjects she can choose from is quite unrestricted.

John chose what he regarded as practical, useful subjects. The techniques used for the core subjects suited his view of school, and he was able to exhibit his superiority in art/craft skills during exercises which allow him to practise them under other subject headings. Hence, his performance in those subjects is good and he has not developed a hatred for them, nor has he rejected school. He plans to go on to year 11 to gain a qualification which will enable him to enter employment at a higher level and succeed in post-secondary training. He may go on to year 12 to specialise in technical studies, English and applied mathematics. John knows where he wants to go because he took a career education course which included a work experience component that showed him the possibilities that are before him.

Now let us look at a fifth member of the school community. Peter has been unemployed since he left another school during the previous year. He has entered the study-work programme for which an industrial structure is used. He will be released from work (a 35 hour week) to enter two or three subjects, one of which will probably be designed to help him get his next job by remedying his poor communication skills. All of the subjects are available to him and he will join other students from other parts of the school who are studying the same subjects at his level. Now, with his self-confidence restored, he is considering whether to accept a job immediately, return to a 'normal' full-time course of study at Marion or at a technical college, or do some part-time study alongside a part-time job.

Recognising the benefits to students and the greater personal satisfaction derived by teachers from a more enthusiastic, less negative, student body, staff have learned to work together to develop a realistic optimum mix which best suits each member of the full range of students—from formal group instruction, through to informal individual activity learning.

Presentation

Two factors which should influence the mode of presentation teachers might adopt, and, as a corollary, their choice of the most efficient learning environment for their students, must be introduced at this point. It is important to consider the principles which teachers can follow to determine the best methods available to them and the most effective ways by which they might distribute the time that is available to achieve that end.

There is little evidence of research into optimum lesson lengths, and the appropriate balance between the various kinds of activities which may occupy a school day, but our experience and the information which was available led us to develop some clear guidelines. That some of our conclusions emerged from practical considerations of only related matters does not invalidate them.

There are many pieces of research which support the table. While remembering is not the whole of learning, and individuals vary enormously, classes are more consistent.

Table 4

Mode	Remember
hearing	about 10%
seeing	" 30%
saying	" 70%
doing	" 90%

Although it is necessary, in practice, to spend time talking and showing things to youngsters, the table does indicate that every effort should be made to maximise the time students spend at the active pursuits of 'saying' and 'doing'.

Although there are many minor variables which have not been considered, the teacher who wants to maximise the cognitive gains of his students will want to devote as much time as possible to oral-type work (serious discussion, prepared oral statements), and 'hands-on' activity. Organisational costs are more than compensated for by the effectiveness of the learning which results. If it takes an extra ten minutes out of even a brief forty minute period to move a class into a workshop and a further ten minutes to clear up after an exercise, the potential for learning (remembering) during the twenty minutes of activity far exceeds the likely outcome of a totally chalk and talk lesson.

After about thirty minutes, the amount most people remember depends upon the mode most dominant in the teaching/learning environment. Lessons that are predominantly 'passive' fall off in effectiveness after about half an hour, while the active modes have students learning for about double that time. These two considerations suggest a programme of 35 - 40 minute lessons and 60 - 80 minute lessons. Marion had 40, 60 and 80 minute periods but 'singles' and 'doubles' would have served as well. (Perhaps a 60 minute period in the afternoons is better than 80 minutes for younger or less able students). It is worth noting in setting up the structure that, allowing 5 minutes for getting started, and a similar time to wind up the period, two 40 minute lessons only require 70 minutes for the same teaching time. The 10 minutes saved each time can prove very useful for other purposes.

In terms of skill development, practice helps! And it does lead to an increase in the amount of learning which can be achieved through the more active modes. It is also true that training in listening (hearing) and looking (seeing), called active listening and active looking, will improve these learning outcomes.

Our examination of time needs of various subjects could not distinguish one subject from another. The differences have more of their origins in historic habits than in pedagogical requirements. All subjects have occasions when periods longer than 70 minutes are desirable and should be made possible. We saw no difference between the study-trip away from the campus, and a special study occasion within the school grounds.

Considerations of the methods which teachers might employ take on even greater significance when the motivation of the youngsters, and the amount of material they have retained, and mastered, are measured after prolonged periods of time.

Our experience is congruent with the finding of Richard White of Monash University. Writing in the *Australian Journal of Education*, (1984, pp. 3 - 16), White describes an experiment in which students in three comparable groups were all asked to study the geography of coasts using three methods. One group had classroom exposure and no more, the second went on an excursion where the teacher sought to reinforce what had been taught from the texts, while the last goup had a 'processing' excursion i.e. the students were allotted tasks—questions and answers, problems to be solved, comments to be made on observations, sketches and so on. The immediate recall was not significantly different, but three months later the first groups recalled 51% and 58% respectively, while the 'processing' group achieved 90%. Other observations also suggest that, over time, the level of understanding which the latter group have is likely to have deepened more than the other groups.

While White's example involved students in an exercise away from the school, we have found the same to be true on campus. Hence the arguments about the length of period should have to do with the methodology to be used by the teacher, and the time a teacher needs to use each technique effectively. We should therefore employ a mix of lesson lengths to give the best time spans over a normal school week.

Since most teachers will want to introduce various activities, yet claim a need to give some 'solid instruction' sometimes, it probably emerges that a mix of 40 minutes and 60 - 80 minute periods is most appropriate. Maybe a base of 60 - 80 minutes will be most acceptable lengths of instruction periods, but observations suggests that the mix is the best solution, especially as an interim measure until teachers have mastered the techniques that the longer period makes possible. The mix of shorter and longer lessons also serves to pacify those who want to see their class at least three or four times a week.

Thus the active modes require that some (double) hour-long periods be included for every subject. Four exposures/week allow for at least two longer periods of 60 - 80 minutes for each subject. During the longer periods, teachers are able to use activity modes of teaching and increase interest and productivity by including, on occasion, a mixture of activities within the one period. Fewer lessons each day, less changes of lesson each day, and a smaller number of classes for the teacher to prepare for, all support the better learning outcomes which result from longer lesson lengths.

Some teachers still claim that the 60 - 80 minute period is too short for their subject. However, beyond eighty minutes, *normally*, teachers are forced to introduce some kind of a break time in order to preserve momentum. But some departures from the norm of every subject can be a benefit and considerable flexibility becomes possible once a staff has embraced the general principles. The aim is to make the time distribution criteria work for better teaching and learning rather than have time restraints control and even prevent good pedagogy.

OTHER CONCERNS ABOUT TIME

Within the broader considerations of practicality for a whole school, and with White's evidence in mind, it is desirable to maximise the time which can be given to field-work which involves the investigatory modes. In the course of the presentation of any subject there will be perhaps four or five times each year when a longer period is desirable. As an overlay and occasional arrangement, the longer time span can be adopted 'for the day' to accommodate special needs. Study trips and study camps are easily justified as their effectiveness far exceeds learning experiences by other modes. While I have accepted the criticism that absence from other teacher's classes does create difficulties for them, I have consistently countered complaints with the suggestion that other subjects might include 'stay at home study trips' in their programmes. Periods of 2 or 3 hours up to 4 or 5 days could concentrate emphasis upon a study which may be limited to a single subject, or be multi-disciplinary in nature. Classes should continue in their absence, but with sensitivity and sympathy for the students who are absent. (It is unforgivable that a teacher should penalise students who go on a study trip in another subject—the teacher loses the respect of the students and interrupts the rhythm of participatory learning.) Three examples might help readers to appreciate the principle—a food science class who wish to prepare a full meal; another class might wish to view a long film yet still have time for a suitable introduction beforehand and for follow up afterwards; an advanced science class might spend half a day introducing a new concept.

Stimulated by the novelty of each situation, these occasions can result in a very high learning efficiency, and any inconvenience more than compensated for by the overall gains in motivation, learning and understanding which occurs.

Once the value of fieldwork has been appreciated for the learning outcomes it makes possible, it is likely to be employed so often that the basic timetable will appear to have broken down because a part of some of the classes may be absent for several consecutive lessons. The solution is not in abandoning special field studies but in establishing a balance. At Marion we set up 'days of uninterrupted study' on the calendar—that is, days when study strictly followed the timetable. These periods can be included for a variable two days each week, and, perhaps, especially during the first week of term to allow classes to settle, and over the whole of the last two weeks of term when staff and students are jaded and opportunities for adjustment are more difficult. Social considerations press the claims for a day which includes opportunities for teachers and individual students or small groups to spend time together. Hence the arguments for longer breaks (e.g. a 30 minute morning recess), and for less haste between periods, gain validity.

A longer school day (8 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.) introduces greater flexibility and, in its relationship to the availability of services, makes more opportunities for students to get help either informally or by special arrangement without 'expecting' anybody to spend more than the usual time at school unless they have reason to do so. One reason for staying might be to take advantage of school services for that part of their work called independent study. Staff also enjoy more relaxed opportunities to help or talk to students, and either to use or to arrange to use, the various services that are offered.

MODES OF PRESENTATION

There are schools which have sought students on the basis that their teachers employ a particular method of instruction. These examples have contributed in that they have highlighted the strength of some approach, either as a way of handling content material or for a particular group of students. Often some of the work the youngsters have done and the evidence of learning are impressive, but, on closer examination, one usually finds that the students also suffered from the limitations of the approach.

However there is a sense in which the school can be divided into a number of sub-schools on the basis of method.

If we keep the various modes of learning fixed, then at any one time each mode will be contributing to a group of students who are a sub-group of the total school population. While the mix of students will change according to subject, topic, ability of the student, student's preferred mode, teacher's preferred mode, each mode will continue to have a population (in concept, these sub-schools are not to be thought of as being made up of groups of students kept in physical and organisational isolation).

Each mode has its own set of techniques, and provides a student with a learning setting appropriate to his or her need at the time. While the students may (even usually) 'travel' from one setting to another, this may not be so, and students may select (or adopt on recommendation) the mode they and their teachers feel is most appropriate to their learning style (need):

The *traditional mode* needs no introduction. It is characterised by set classes in which all members participate in a single programme. Teacher technique is characterised by teacher-to-group instruction, directed follow-up and testing based on the requirements of externally formulated syllabuses. Student differences are recognised by alternative programmes which vary over a continuum of several levels for each subject. Tradition identifies a basic body of knowledge and ideas which students are required to understand and learn.

The *flexible or open-space mode* is likewise well understood. It gives emphasis to individual programming and various levels and is less of a director of studies and more of a motivator, guide, enabler and assessor of the success of the student in each programme. Students set their own pace and teachers characteristically work in teams. As in the traditional school, different abilities are allowed for.

The student-elective mode offers a wide range of courses, many of which have been suggested by students. The students are able to select the courses they want to follow and may, in fact, develop their own study plan. The staff act as resource people, offering their own expertise or advising the students how and where they may gain the help they need. The importance of this latter pastoral role should not be underestimated. All students at Marion at some time in years 10 and 11 employ this mode alongside the bridging mode. Increasingly it is becoming part of the negotiation which is associated with developing an option at a challenging level.

The mode for *citizenship training* gives instruction and experience in matters concerned in government, group activity in a community, leadership, services and other areas of inter-personal activity such as public and personal health, religion, environmental and consumer studies. Courses involve student participation programmes which often reach into the community at large. For example, senior students who undertake leadership training respond to staff who aim at transferring acceptable attitudes and value scales to the students in the hope that they will develop an appreciation of the appropriate areas of activity.

Students in the *the community mode* are called upon to develop their own study style and to use resources which are already in the community. In doing this, they have an opportunity to learn something of their own impact upon the local community.

The bridging mode aims at providing students with study and experience packages which are complete in themselves. The programmes cover a wide range, but participation in any one activity may involve all, most, or only a small fraction of the student body. While each activity temporarily replaces other programmes which are based on subject disciplines, it usually draws upon a number of disciplines in the course of the study. It includes such programmes as study camps and study trips, integrated or general studies course, work experience opportunities, either inside or outside the school, and a variety of special experience courses.

The mode of *adult learning* enables senior students to join secondary classes on a full-time or full-subject basis, or as casual participants, or they may enter classes primarily designed for adults. Its value is in its attraction for people of all ages who have a common interest in a single experience. The entry of adults to the school emphasises individual challenge and the flexible interpretation of syllabuses. Teachers and students characteristically construct their own programmes and negotiate both the content and the pattern of learning which will be pursued. It might take the form of blocks of time that can be used by students for whom the basic structure of the school interferes with other obligations such as part-time work. Each mode will have its supporters and suggest alternatives within its unique boundaries. These modes help us break out of our stereotypes in ways that will legitimise a variety of learning patterns. They will also encourage teachers and students to view content in close relationship to the best techniques by which the topics might be opened up, and learning might occur. Recognising a wide range of contexts in which learning can occur, teachers are less tempted to try to force students to fit into a particular mould.

* * *

THE LESSON

Numbers, rationals
Nouns and verbs
How do I resist
The tempting, flooding
lure of sleep
And listen to the rest?

A teacher's talking
Is it to me
Or another sombre pupil
What is she saying?
Must he talk so fast?
Will the world end
            if I understand?

Can they feel my anguish
Can they see my fear?
For surely for a student
        like me
Nothing can overcome
The terror of the lesson

by Anita Wright

BRIDGING . . .

I did a bridging project with Melissa Lecky on 'Dance'. We got 95% for it. I have already done dancing, but Melissa hadn't, so I had to teach her. It was an experience for both Melissa and me, for Melissa learnt the basics of tapdancing and I had the experience of teaching her.

. . . Jodie Ford
Year 10

I think quite a few things I have done at Marion High have helped me out and will continue to help me in later life. By doing Drama for three years I have found it very easy to discuss things with other people, and to be able to state my opinions, but listen to others as well.

Enrichments have helped me, especially Motor Mechanics which helped with my job at the petrol station. I found Science and Maths a bit droll, but enjoyed doing Food and Digestion—it helped me lose weight and get fit. Bridging (although difficult) was great, as I conducted on-street interviews which was a good way to help me open up and talk to people I don't know.

David Penberthy

(David's chosen interpretation of MOVEMENT was macabre: he examined attitudes towards torture and did it with a combination of clear analysis and sardonic wit)

Two students won the Oliphant Award for their model describing wave motion.

Yolande Broesder and
Kym Forster
Year 10

FLIGHT . . .

1 Travers Street,
Sturt 5047

14th July, 1983

Dear Anna,

During this week at Marion High School, the students have all been working on Flight Projects in all our subjects.

Everyone in English is doing different things. I am making a child's storybook on Flight. It will have big printing, illustrations and a foreword.

For Maths, Mr. Strelnieks, our teacher, gave the class a sheet to do. It includes working out an itinerary for a tour of the world and it has problems involving time zones, exchange rates and flying times and distances.

Everyone is busy in Science. We were given a pamphlet on Flight and there are many experiments that we have to do. Yesterday we saw some films in the hall.

For French, we are learning some vocab. words about Flight, a poster on it, and we talked about some famous French aviators. Well, that's what we started talking about but we got sidetracked so we ended up talking about Jews. Today we are having a French breakfast because it is Bastille Day, even though that has nothing to do with flight.

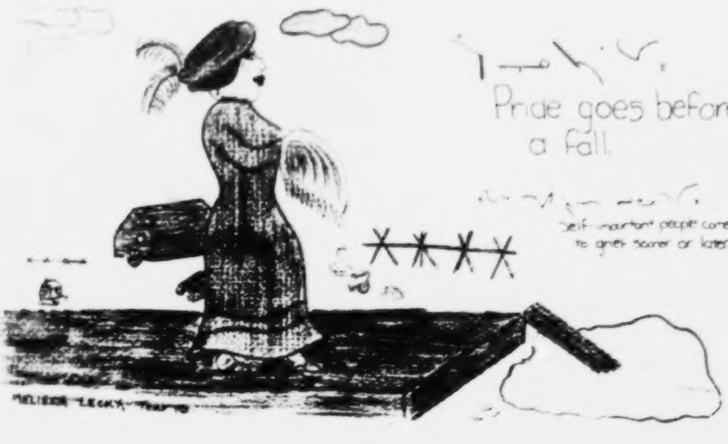
The people who want to, and are willing to pay $1.00, can make a frisbee in Plastics. I think I will make one because then I can give it to my brother for Christmas.

I am making a cake in Home Economics. It will be in the shape of a kite. This sort of cake is called 'a fantasy food'.

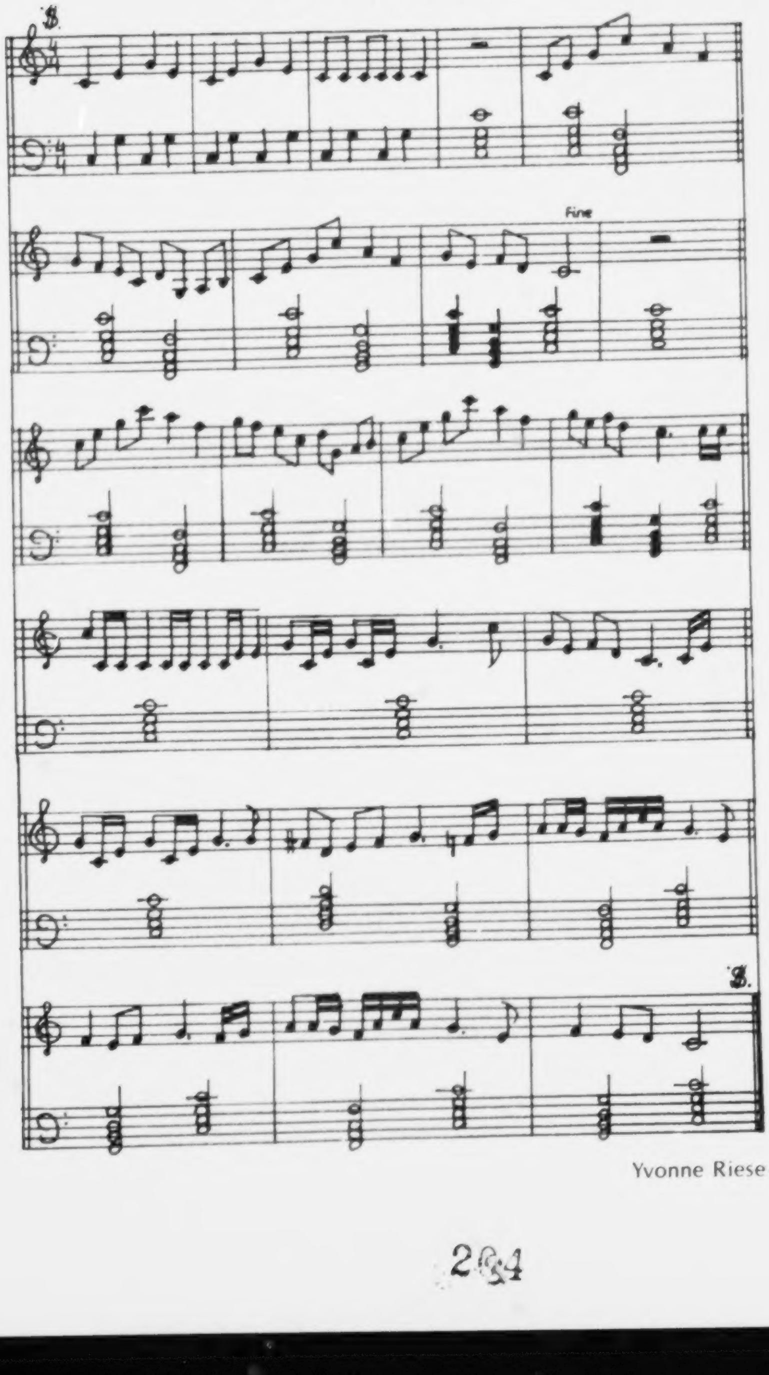
We can't do much for Shorthand because we haven't learnt all the vowels and consonants yet. Most people are drawing pictures to do with flight and then drawing the letter that that object starts with. I don't know what I'll do yet.

In Bushcraft we are not doing anything because we only have one lesson and that has already gone. This letter was about what we are doing for flight in other subjects is our project for Typing.

Yours sincerely,
Barbara Bayly
Year 9


Pride goes before a fall.
Self-important people come to grief sooner or later
MELISSA LEAKY, Year 9

PIECE FOR ORGAN



Yvonne Riese

63 Australian Avenue,
Clovelly Park, S.A. 5042

October 13th, 1983

Dear Mr Hannaford,

During the last few weeks of term two, Marion High School undertook a major project featuring Leonardo Da Vinci's famous contributions to technology and arts.

On Tuesday the nineteenth of July we were given contracts to complete. On these contracts we were to write our topical subject, place of study and materials used. This caused great confusion as few people knew what was expected of them. Our class had several teachers try to explain the project but both times we were uncertain of what to do, perhaps more confused than before. The idea was to study any problem solving aspect, in a time limit of three days.

With an extremely hazy vision of our expectations, Simon, Karryn and I set out hopefully to fulfil our obligation. Together we decided on a theme, "Images created by music" which we related to Da Vinci's paintings. To achieve this we listened to Debussy's famous work "The Sunken Cathedral". After listening to this impressionistic music we combined the images created in our minds to form a picture. The picture was then converted to the wall and painted.

The given time limit created a few problems. For example, time was wasted between coats of paint and sanding, but it had some advantages as I work more efficiently under pressure.

During this project I learnt about painting skills, the "do's and don'ts", through trial and error. Afterwards I was also able to understand the people I was working with much better.

L…RDO DA VINCI

After the investigation week had finished, it was decided our school would hold a Da Vinci concert featuring music, song, dance, science, gymnastics, English, art and history. We were given five days within which time the different faculties prepared the items and displays for a night. Our school hall became a typical Renaissance market place, and its participants, Renaissance characters in period dress. Both evenings ran smoothly and were enjoyed by all who attended.

Through this concert our school was able to expose parents to Da Vinci's contributions to the Renaissance period and today's world; aspects of which we had studied.

In activities such as these you learn more than in the classroom situation. It involves you in the reality of Da Vinci's works in a live situation. These new experiences developed our understanding. Projects of this nature have many advantages and have proved very successful. Although our views at first were hazy, as we progressed deeper, the more understanding we gained, and the clearer the whole project became. I am pleased that Marion High School sees the necessity for such projects which enrich and strengthen our understanding of the material we study.

Yours faithfully,
Jane Healey

LONELINESS

Children in the yard, playing with
a ball,
Standing away from them, my back
against the wall.
I wish to me something they would say
But instead all they do is run away
Like me, they don't
Talk to me, they won't.

Sitting down, the breeze blowing my hair,
Passing by, they stop to stare.
I ask them, "Where you're going, can I
come too?"
They just look at me as if I belong in a
zoo!
"Answer me," I say, "Well?"
All they say is "Go to Hell!"

They walk on, heading for home,
Giggling, they say I look like a
gnome.
To get away from me they run,
They always seem to have so much fun.
To their catty remarks there is no end,
Oh, why can't I have a friend?

. . . Carolyn Cram
Year 9

Life

The ultimate experience

Two fuse to become one: the beginning of life.
Developing
Growing
Anguish
Pain

Life.

Joy.
Jubilation.
A perfect being
A life that was created.
It has a beginning . . .
Learning day by day:
living for today
learning something new.

Emotions: envy at the bird so free
angry that we can't fly
sad because it can end
jealous that we are not what we can be
happy at knowing why
joy at discovery: innocent and pure love.
Purity.

Sharing.
Caring.
Understanding.
Commitment.
Discovery.

Life.

Reminiscing on the past . . .
Living in the present . . .
Thinking about tomorrow . . .
Striving for the future . . .

Life is a gift
Life is for living.

Life: the ultimate experience.

Death.

It has a beginning . . .
. . . it has an end.
Creation.

. . . Anita Jeisman
Year 12

COMPUTER STORIES . . . Year 8 Creative Writing

My Computer

Last summer I got a computer for my birthday, from my Auntie. I was never interested in computers so I just threw it in the cupboard upon the other junk.

One day I had nothing to do so I decided to pull all the junk out of the cupboard and finally get to the computer. Two minutes later the computer was sitting on my bed and I plugged in the switch.

First of all it had a blurry look on the screen, then I pushed a couple of letters and then it went to normal. I was about to start mucking around with it when I heard the doorbell. It was my Auntie Rave. She pushed me down onto the lounge and got some tea and coffee. Would you believe she stayed for three hours, and all of that time she just raved on and on?

Finally she left, and I went back upstairs to my bedroom and started playing with my computer. I didn't really know what to do so I just played with it pushing all the letters. Soon I got sick of it and went to bed.

Sharon Gordon

Computer

I was walking home so I could play with my computer. It can do Maths, English, Language, Science, Home Economics, and it built me a bike, a BMX bike. It was a Red line bike and it was fast. It had alloy wheels and it made me a train lifesize. The train had a space invader machine and a computer that made the train go faster and it made me a pair of skates that went very, very, very fast. It nearly made me a robot, but it blew up and then it made me a house with a computer that ran it for me.

Glynn Cawthorne

15

THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE CONCEPT

Activity modes of learning, concerns about the effective use of time and the extension of learning beyond the classroom, complex classes, and moves which enhance self-disciplined and self-directed study, all led us to acknowledge that a portion of the energy and expertise of a staff should be directed towards arrangements which support students (and teachers). The concept of the learning resource centre arises out of these needs.

Ideally, the service would be offered from one location, but, in a particular school, the several parts may have to be scattered about the campus. While each part would fulfil its particular function, with a minimum of overlap, collectively, they would form a single entity governed by a common set of principles. The learning might occur almost anywhere where students have a will to increase their skills, knowledge and understanding. However efficient or supportive their teachers might be, there will always be times when maturing and self-reliant students will want to look for resources beyond the classroom. Much of this book has been given to describing a happy, positive environment in which students feel motivated to learn. Given that kind of atmosphere, students will want to use the human and material resources of a learning resource centre, and teachers will be supported in their efforts to provide a personal service to students, either in small groups or as individuals.

The sub-sections of the learning resource centre concept gathered their inspiration out of the work done by individual teachers who had learning support roles at Marion and in several other schools, some in England and Sweden. The learning support service at Marion is the outcome. It includes:

- The *library/resource centre* with its books, magazines, audio-visual materials and staff service.
- The *multi-cultural centre* where 'English classes' and 'Foreign language classes' are augmented by 'drop-in assistance' to all students with low competence in English, and with other cultural needs.
- The *computer centre* with its service to individual study, recreational programmes, class work, and class extension work.
- The *reading centre* where year 8 students with acute reading (and numeracy!) difficulties are given specific help, either by referral or on request.
- The *learning centre* which gives the wide range of services which will be described in more detail in the next sub-section.
- The *field or outdoor education centre* which provides a base for field studies and adventure programmes.

A number of these services are in continuous heavy demand between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Hence the concept fills a need which traditional school structures overlook. It also decreases the need for staff to be engaged in non-productive supervision, or for students to be pushed into loads which they are uncomfortable with, just to ensure that they are fully supervised (formally employed) all through the school day.

By extending the school day (chapter 14) and holding some classes outside the traditional hours (9a.m. - 3.30p.m.), as well as supplementing the classroom, time spaces have been created within the day when the learning centre services can be delivered to students who are not continuously involved with their teachers. Without any pressure to spend more time at school, many students do stay on because the services provide added opportunities to improve the efficiency of their learning. The concept also assumes that the various facilities will be appropriately staffed. Re-appraisal of the way time was being used and allocated to teachers was basic to its success.

The Learning Centre

By July, 1981, with the programme for disruptive school rejectors no longer necessary, we could reassess how we would use the building and the staff who had been responsible for that project. As the school makes the assumption that secondary education is a five (even six) year programme, the concept of offering support to a small number of year 10 and 11 students, could be extended to encourage students across the spectrum, without any possibility of 'labelling' any one group of clients. Such an approach would be more consistent with our overall aims.

The possibilities for the centre which were envisaged included:

- an extension of class room work
- an extension of subject work by providing
    - the place and tools for three-dimensional work, growing from descriptive or theoretical study
    - the place for independent analysis by able students who are not sufficiently stimulated in the classroom (able students often coast and are subject to boredom)
    - the place for individual invention and creativity related to a specific aspect of work
- a centre to 'bolster the 3R's and other skills by direct instruction'
- a hobby centre where students could follow their hobbies, so important in fostering the self-reliance needed by adolescents and young adults
- a resource for teachers of multi-level classes to enable them to concentrate upon small groups when the need arose
- a centre for much of the enrichment work
- a centre for individual students whose school history has indicated that formal classroom work may not be suitable for them: for example, by teaching specific skills through practically-based activities.

From the planning stages it was clear that the active participation of a deputy principal with a curricular role would help to connect the centre with the faculties. Its effective use would involve a development in teachers' thinking re appropriate methodologies. One of the roles of the centre would be to increase students' self-reliance in learning, and, while teachers might seek help when students did not respond to their approaches, it would take longer to encourage teachers to 'let go' of the more able students.

If this learning centre was to fulfil its aims, it required a senior administrator to co-ordinate the range of activities and to help maintain a pleasant working atmosphere. Teachers, who could rely upon the senior's assistance, would come to the centre where they could see its possibilities for themselves. In this way, the whole staff would be relieved of additional duties and assistance to students would be made more effective. A teacher-aide would help to maintain this service.

The team needed to include people with a variety of skills and a willingness to acquire more. A practically-oriented teacher was permanently attached, so that subject teachers wanting to develop courses in different and invigorating ways had the resource of this expertise and co-operation in team-teaching. Teachers with an academic orientation, yet the flexibility to envisage new avenues for able students, were needed. The 'academic-orientation' was needed only in so far as it ensured a sound approach to scholarship for the checking of theory against practice.

Here is an example. Because the centre was available, it was possible to develop a course in year 10 for students who were interested in history, but had not the capacity to tackle the more politically-oriented syallabus. The history teachers, working with the teacher-manager of a pioneer village, which was situated at Morphett Vale, about 15 kilometres from the school, produced a programme about pioneer history in which students not only restored equipment, learnt skills of leather work, spoke-construction for wheels, and reconstructed a sulky, but also learnt the details of the social setting, the conditions faced by pioneers and began to examine the civilization that the pioneers brought with them. The involvement in restoration put the students 'inside' historical time. While practically-oriented courses have the immediate attraction of 'doing', there is a danger that they can become substitutes for theoretical study, and in a subject like history (as in any subject), there is a need to perceive the whole.

In the team there needed to be a teacher able to help students improve their use of language in writing, reading, comprehension and listening. A concept of language that encourages students to gain confidence in speech and to be willing to extend their vocabulary can often be an element in their growth and emotional maturity. Likewise, it was essential to have a teacher with an ability to help students with mathematics. Both of these areas seem to account for much of the disgruntled, anti-social behaviour of students in most schools. The choice which operates to give students an increasing control over their year's work and its future direction does not eliminate the need for competence in these areas where failure, and the resentment which follows, can foster a self-destructive syndrome.

For example, we identified a student in a modified level class who needed understanding of algebra to reach standard level. It took a term, but when this student earned the right to enter that standard level class, *and* coped so well that she was comfortably in the middle of the group, others could see 'a way through' to success. Students who enjoyed 'stirring' in class, became earnest and asked to be considered for an algebra course. While it would be inaccurate to see the centre as the sole cause of the 'turn-around', this impetus to learning motivation would not have been possible if the centre had not been established. A balance of men and women in the team has created a sound basis for intelligent conversation. Not only does this constant interaction help students to develop more positive behaviour patterns, it increases staff confidence to offer a wider variety of assistance.

From its inception, the centre has sought the assistance of parent-volunteers who work with students and with the staff in an almost infinite number of ways. This wider human contact builds a maturity of approach which reinforces socially-acceptable behaviour and aids students' learning. For example, a speech therapy programme, which has helped over twenty students in four years, has been carried out largely by volunteers.

The teachers and the teacher-aide all found that individual differences can stimulate educational thinking, because there is common commitment to the basic direction of the learning centre: that of re-establishing self-esteem if it has been lost, increasing skills, improving performance and furthering self-reliance in the students. All of these aims have value for all school leavers.

Since a school should not have additional teachers to staff its learning resource centre services, there must be a pay-off with class size and the number of subjects that can be offered. In fact this proves to be the proper way to provide 'for change'. I have been in many schools where additional teachers have been used only to decrease class size. The teachers go on doing things the same old way, but with the smaller classes, and the students gain little or nothing as a result. By providing support for the teachers, as well as the students, real changes in methodology become a reality. Teachers are persuaded to articulate new methods and combine them in new ways. The help of the extra teachers has been made available where it is most needed.

STAFFING AND ITS EFFECT ON CLASS SIZE

In most schools it seems that there is no need to change the size of classes because the staff for learning services can be provided in lieu of supervision which is no longer necessary. In other schools significant numbers of teachers can be released by reducing the number of subjects (lines) some senior students are required to study.

When these sources are not present, an additional 10% use of staff for these purposes of course makes a 10% addition, on paper, to the average size of classes. Teachers find this acceptable because it enables them to make an overall improvement in learning for their students. The actual mean size of a complex class, which has enjoyed the help of the centre, may be smaller over a week. The simple arithmetic follows this hypothetical, but typical, case. Say, for example, that the old class size is 22, then the new size will be about 24. After teaching, during a week, 24,24,18,15 students respectively in each of the four lessons, the average would be about 20, or less than 22, because on two days the size of the class was reduced by arranging for some of them to be taught in the learning centre.

EVALUATION

In 1982, Marion received a grant which was used to establish an action research project under an external officer. The school sought to evaluate the development of the learning centre up to that time, and to clarify its aims and procedures within the school as a whole and in relation to other aspects of the learning support service.

When confronted with the intention of documenting the work of the centre, initially, there were some fears among the teachers. However, one of the group agreed to keep a journal describing the progress of one student who had been considered 'at risk'. To save time, the staff meetings were taped for further analysis by the group. Statistical information would come through the booking procedure which involved the carding of objective information by the teacher-aide who was a member of the learning centre staff.

The project officer, who kept the group to the action research model and prevented a temptation to meander, was soon appreciated by the group. They became more precise in their thinking, and earlier fears about self-revelations soon dissipated. 'The tapes were recording challenges, doubts, re-appraisals and the stuff of lively debate'. The group was learning that 'the analysis of their processes can consciously bring about improvement in techniques. It can help the group to focus on the learning process that they, as well as the students, are undergoing'. (E. Jolly in report, Marion High School, 1982)

There was a tendency to give too much attention to the overt consideration of behaviour modification of a very small group of students. Firstly, they were not thinking positively about improving approaches to learning and the success-orientation needed in the centre. Secondly, concentration on one group was detrimental to the whole range of programmes.

One of the group, and several of the school staff, had to be pressed away from the 'sin-bin' kind of mentality to make the centre 'an enjoyable and invigorating learning centre for students at all levels of performance, and over the full range of students'. The group had to recognise the impact they could make on the school by being preoccupied with the learning atmosphere that they were creating.

In 1982, a teacher from the centre was included in a team of Marion teachers that went to Victoria to examine programmes for gifted and talented students. He returned even more eager to develop ideas that positively helped the full range of students. After the final report of the evaluating group had affirmed the objectives of the centre it went on to describe the staff which would be necessary:

- The role of administrator-aide is central.
- The role of the deputy principal—the senior co-ordinator—is more than a supervisory and administrative role.
- The practical and adaptive role of the teacher in charge of the hobby-craft workshop is essential.
- The encouragement of scholarship requires a teacher who is academic yet flexible.
- The role of the language teacher requires patience, and a capacity for invention, remembering the importance of spoken, as well as written, language.
- Assistance from staff and students is actively sought. (Jolly, 1982)

There was specific reference to the atmosphere which must prevail:

> We are consistently, pleasantly, firmly when necessary, work-oriented . . . [and in this way] we will remove the belief that any one of the programmes offered or supported is a 'bludge'.
>
> We will reward excellence, encourage movement upwards to the next intellectual level in each faculty, expect courtesy, punctuality and pride in presentation . . . and so help to establish patterns of behaviour that are needed to live in our society and to continue learning. In this atmosphere, self motivation of both teachers and students can increase. (Jolly, 1982)

There were several references to the clientele whose problems, once they had been identified, could receive assistance:

> New enrolments in the school were a special challenge, but the centre had a unique role in enabling these students to overcome 'learning blocks', whether they were of a physical, intellectual, emotional or social kind. (Jolly, 1982)

There were youngsters with specific problems. Among this group there were a few cases where the staff was convinced that the particular student's intention to leave school should be reversed, and the student encouraged to stay on. To that end, special courses were negotiated and established for them, which highlighted their interests, e.g. one was interested in child-care and another in motor mechanics. Both had an intense interest in the particular area, but deliberate techniques in avoiding work had created immense problems. Progress was often slow but it was positive. In some cases the social background which had created the anti-school attitude proved too powerful for an ultimate victory, but none failed to modify their attitudes in constructive ways.

Two groups, 'the gifted and talented' and the 'English second stage' (i.e. students of non-English speaking background who had gained a basic competence in English), offered special challenges. There were also others who had problems with the use of the English language. Other faculties were identifying special problems. A role of 'unblocking' learning channels was emerging as something which was specific and often individual.

Enrichment skills could also be fostered. Because a more constructive use of leisure time emerged, the centre became a very busy place during breaks when the activity range might simultaneously contain the intellectually demanding 'Dungeons and Dragons', chess, film study, tapestry and construction of a cupboard and a 'go-cart'. Over a week or month the list was almost endless.

Lastly, teachers were learning to extend their lessons by booking-in students to carry out work relevant to the topic being studied by the class (e.g. a section of a class might be making a model in the centre while the rest were engaged in more traditional forms of expression).

VOLUNTARY HELP

The programme lends itself to an extension of the staff through the addition of parents, students, and other volunteers (mostly parents, but also other adults and some senior students). They act as guides to students, support for staff, and as models who are consistent, calm, compassionate, disinterested and firm. At one particular time, for example, the centre had the assistance of:

- two helpers in the hobby-craft area (2 hours per week)—one who works at night and in the holidays
- one helper in year 8 basic mathematics, (which has a practical component using the hobby shop) (1½ hours per week)
- one helper in year 11/12 enrichment (2½ hours per week—term 2)
- one helper in year 8 directed activities (2 hours per week)
- one guide/mentor for gifted students (4 hours per week)
- one enthusiast/expert working with more able English students (years 8 and 9—4 hours per week).

Together, these people added 0.6 teachers to the staff, but because of the diversity of talents which they had, they were even more valuable than this figure suggests. That was in 1982. By 1984 one room had been added, the building upgraded, a mezzanine storage area installed, and plans made for a further extension. One additional teacher had been added to the staff, but the pressure was still present. Interestingly, there has been little resistance from staff, probably because the small increase in class size was well compensated. (There is also evidence that the classes the students come from are more productive than they had been.)

Out of the success of the project and its evaluation, the criteria for the establishment of a learning centre have evolved:

- The active and continuous involvement of the School's principal is necessary so that all staff are aware of his or her interest.
- The centre is to be seen as complementing learning in the school, not as an alternative. The assumption is that all students can be helped to improve their performance.
- A teacher aide is needed to book-in students and to carry out the various administrative duties associated with such a multi-purpose, learning resources centre.
- The staff, embracing humanities and science/technical aspects of learning, need to work closely together, be interested in individual learning and adaptable,

(Marion High School had 4 teachers: 2 men and 2 women. Two teachers operate on each line).

- One member of the staff team needs to hold a senior position and assist liaison with all the faculties so that the role of the centre as an extension of the classroom, for faculty based study, can be fulfilled.
- The centre must cater for all students in a friendly, stimulating yet challenging way, so that excellence can be achieved.
- To encourage learning, the centre needs to be open from at least half an hour before classes begin continuously until half an hour afterwards so that interested students may use its facilities, particularly the craft-hobby facilities.
- The centre must be geographically central so that teachers can easily see and want to use its facilities.
- The provision of an inviting environment will foster more constructive recreational use of the centre's facilities.

Other Learning Support Services

The library/resource centre staff have always received groups of students from classes. Teachers have also been able to arrange with the librarians to bring whole classes to the area for some appropriate activity. Within the new concept we were able to increase the staff to enable them to offer a more positive teaching/support role, and to create the opportunity for a wider and more diverse range of services than had been the norm.

The multicultural centre fulfilled functions similar to the learning centre for the benefit of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. By 1983 six teachers found it difficult to meet all the demands (see chapter 19).

Two teachers (1.6 full-time equivalents), with some help from volunteers, kept pace with the numbers of students and teachers who wished to use the computer centre at some time in the day.

The reading centre came alive and modified its role, not only by including 'numeracy' as well as reading, but also by becoming a place where low performing youngsters could find refuge and get help with material from anywhere in the curriculum. The informal atmosphere was conducive to students just dropping in—those who had already become attached brought others with questions to be answered or work that could only be done if help was given.

In Chapter 10 there is a discussion about how the practical arrangements by which the field or outdoor education staff team can operate efficiently.

It will perhaps be surprising to some to discover that these services increase the amount of 'casual' help that some other teachers offer apart from the learning centre but in the same spirit. They see students in a new light and modify their own roles to include the offer of help to students on request. Some subject departments have created an atmosphere in which students can and do approach any teacher in the area with their queries.

Whenever these services are offered, it is apparent that the cynical claims that teachers who work in the classroom are relieved of their *responsibilities*, are false. The opposite occurs because the centre's function is to enable subject teachers to cope with more of the different needs of their individual students and to arrange for more of them to get assistance than would otherwise be the case.

'DOCTOR' SERVICE–THE ULTIMATE SERVICE

In the atmosphere created by the learning resource centre, students begin to articulate their concerns, stimulated by the knowledge that they will get an immediately helpful response to any request that they may make to a member of the staff, in any one of the sections, for help with their work. Theoretically that is the kind of service that has always been available from the small library staff. In practice, it was not possible because it was just as difficult to find one of those teachers free as it was to find a subject-teacher free to answer a request.

This is possibly the ultimate success. By 1984 more than 100 casual requests (i.e. self-motivated inquiries) were being made and attended to each day.

As the power of the concept gains appreciation from all the parties connected with a school, it will play an increasingly central part in the learning programmes of students. People will be encouraged to return to school. Independent learners will have a wider scope. It also creates the conditions in which less staff energy is needed for unproductive 'supervision'. And it makes way for arrangements under which teachers are less hampered by having to take time to 'control' students.

Concluding Comments

Given the opportunity to operate all of these services in a single, appropriately designed space, the possibilities are even greater. The use of one booking agent, effective co-ordination of staff resources and the visibility of services all encourage self-disciplined study. In some depressed areas, students might attend at night to continue that part of their independent learning now set to be done at home, maybe in poor circumstances. In England, the night sessions have brought dramatic improvements to the performances of disadvantaged students—the potential for a parallel in this country is apparent and waiting to be instituted.

We should also be reminded that all learning does not occur in the ordered way of subject syllabuses. It is a stimulating prospect to think of a school as a place where natural curiosity is fostered by giving a reasonable promise that questions will be answered. Through the learning resource centre concept that prospect is becoming a reality for Marion students.

There will be some who will draw attention to those students who do not easily motivate themselves to study. In a system which is uniformly structured for that eventuality it is not surprising that youngsters wait to be told to study and do not see it as their responsibility to identify their learning needs. It is time to change this situation around and to encourage, even train, young people to seek the help they might need at the time it is needed. The proposition has the attraction that it can be accomplished without raising staffing levels, but out of re-deployment of teachers already in schools.

16

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

In previous chapters we have discussed in some detail the kinds of arrangements which favour student learning. The concept of the learning resource centre has been given prominence both for the help it can give teachers and for its value as a service to students. In this chapter we will examine factors which favour learning outside the formal classroom and relate them to the problems teachers face because the students in every class present a wide diversity of personalities, abilities, interests and aspirations with which conscientious teachers must try to cope.

Independent Study and the Use of Time

> Homework is one of those things about which most people can speak from personal experience. This is either because they have done it as children, have set it as teachers, or have supervised it as parents. Advocates of homework believe that it encourages initiative, *develops independent learning skills* (study habits) and allows time for practice and application of what has been learned in school. Others question its value and argue for its discontinuance. (Coulter, 1981)

For many students, homework is surrounded by a number of formidable obstacles. As young adults emerge from adolescence, they have 'a deep need to be needed, to count for something in the scheme of things, to be of worth and be recognised to be so. Successful relations of all kinds enhance personality and reassure: experiences of rejection are particularly painful and destructive'. (Wall, 1977, p. 50) So often the attempts of the now more self-aware young persons to come to grips with the range of choices around them, and to find independence, are misunderstood. They are rejected by adults, or asked to make decisions which are impossible without support from those people of status, including teachers, who are near them and influential in their lives. There is a tension between the individual's desire for autonomy and the security felt through an increasing awareness that people are there for support, even though reliance upon others lengthens the period of dependence.

The school must therefore balance formal, organised study with opportunities for independent learning so that tension is eased and dependence progressively decreased. It is easy for those who are not faced with conflicting demands upon their time and energy to condemn youngsters who do not seem to be content to sit down regularly to homework assignments. Moreover it is easy to ignore the social pressures or the lack of suitable workplaces with which they are confronted. We discovered that, more often than not, it was some extraneous influence, rather than a lack of desire to learn, that sets youngsters on the way to being among those who neglected their homework. The consequent confrontations which followed in classrooms only hindered satisfactory solutions, promoting instead a deep sensation of injustice and anti-school feeling.

For other students we could reverse the pattern by which, for them, unattractive or difficult written or reading work was left for homework while the straight-forward practical work was done in class. That was especially true for those in the lower level classes. They often enjoyed the practical nature of their classroom work but resisted the rather tedious written or text-based assignments set for homework, because they could not cope with what was asked of them.

There have already been passing references to adjustments to the school's programme, so that an all-encompassing policy could evolve. Although far from perfect, the changes at Marion increased very significantly the out-of-classroom productivity of especially, but not exclusively, the students in the standard, modified and basic level classes. But the benefit was made even greater because tension with teachers was decreased as well, and work in the classroom was better done. More could be accomplished, students felt encouraged and a snowballing effect reflected better attitudes toward school. We discovered that, provided they were given relevant work to do, the chances were now very good that students would do their work well. There was a tendency to increase, not decrease, their commitment because, with encouragement, students were learning to make real life decisions.

The more able students showed less improvement, mostly because the majority were working satisfactorily already, but there were individual spectacular cases of increase. (The data was collected by a comparison of students' declared work-time compared with the pre-independent study period, and by sample interviews. There was close correlation between the increase in effort that was claimed, and the performances of the students.)

While at one level students need to master the knowledge and skills of the subject and so reinforce work done in the classroom, it should also be our intention to extend youngsters by encouraging some extra study at depths which are consistent with their ability. For example, while a senior science student might use some of his time designing and carrying out a physics experiment, another student might 'get on with' her woodwork or his history model and perhaps add a few special touches to the finished product.

One interesting extension of this concept was to introduce students to numbers of the educationally valuable competitions which are set up by various public bodies each year. The number of students who joined in soon increased and the particular goals set by the sponsors added a new level of interest, creativity and initiative. In addition to the intellectual component, students frequently paired off to co-operate in the construction of an entry and add a benefit to the intellectual one. Often the chance to participate was programmed into the term's work on the principle that compulsory involvement might be needed initially to ensure that students discovered the satisfaction of the challenge. After the experience they would express pleasure in it whereas beforehand they had been afraid to enter.

The concept of independent study (compared with the tradition of homework) is not new. As early as the 1930s, J. Lloyd Trump, as headmaster, and later as research officer for the National Secondary School Principals' Association of the USA, drew attention to its importance. He introduced the subject in one of his papers with the words:

> How much time do you possess that is your own? Usually we work together with other people. Even our recreation involves many group activities. Yet, each of us needs opportunities to engage in learning and doing things his own way, to develop competencies in line with his own special interests, and to the extent of abilities, to become creative in what he does.
>
> What a person does on his own with a high degree of independence, determines his unique personality. This is good mental hygiene for an individual; it can also result in maximum contributions of the individual to the general welfare. Unless a human being has these opportunities and responsibilities, he loses his identity as he is swallowed up in a mass of group functions.
>
> Schools need to provide each pupil with opportunities to study and work apart from the mass. All students need to develop responsibility for their own learning, each according to his interests and competencies. The school should challenge each pupil to bring forth higher levels of intellectual inquiry and creativity. (Trump, 1967)

When I spoke with him in 1968, even after continuous drubbing from the traditionalists, he was just as adamant. And he had results to back up his claims.

The concept changes and extends the idea of homework. Our experience supported a new approach. Time out of class for music, the bridging programme for year 10 students, when they were released each morning for a week to work on a planned project, were some of the ways that showed us that most students respond well to opportunities for independent action and the chance to show initiative. We had also observed a different pattern for numbers of young people, especially those in the lower level classes, who resisted all attempts to have them undertake written or memorising homework assignments.

It took us time to realise that some homes could not be as helpful as we, or they, would have liked, for a whole range of reasons; lack of space in the home, both parents working, or moving from one parent's home to another's on a regular or irregular basis, or several smaller children in the family, or shift work. But all of the problems did not rest with the children and their homes. Much of the work set by teachers was irrelevant because it had little bearing on what was required to achieve a successful outcome in a course of learning.

So Marion and some other schools (e.g. in industrial English cities) abolished the term 'homework' and looked for a new approach to the whole matter of independent study—all of the work that must be done outside classroom time.

F. Coulter (1981) summarised what research has discovered about homework (independent study):

- Certain kinds of regularly assigned homework have little influence upon school achievement.
- At the top of the secondary school work done out of school time contributes more to school achievement than time spent in school.
- If lower achievers are to profit from homework, initial ideas introduced in class must be carefully explained.
- Exercises of an exploratory nature may provide a useful intuitive base for new class work, although lower achievers have difficulty with these exercises, and most students tend not to do them.
- Revision assignments should preferably be spaced over time, especially for middle and low ability students who are less able to meet demands of concentrated or mass review exercises.
- Students spend widely differing amounts of time on the same tasks.

There are several aspects which deserve attention. Since only the children from some families are able to practise regular and good study habits, so essential for success at school, it is necessary to arrange for various sections of the learning resource centre, and the various laboratories and workshops, to be open outside class time. (Say from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. or later into the evening.)

During any week, many (most) students wish to do constructive things, which may or may not be school-based. As these activities contribute to the students' development, they should be taken into account and encouraged to the maximum consistent with a proper commitment to their school studies. From another viewpoint, the school could help the students develop a balanced programme and make some decisions about their priorities in the use of time.

STUDENT PLANNING

The new approach requires students to plan their independent study. With training, they learn to adjust their time commitment to school to fit in with other activities away from school, or to use resources which are only available at school. Marion had begun in 1975 to train students at the beginning of each school year (on day 2). They were expected, with their parents' help, to make a plan which suited all of the parties. To get a student's study requirements in perspective, we began to talk about a mean commitment of time to independent study each *week*, time to be fitted into the hours available. We did simple sums with the students: e.g.

> There are 168 hours in a week.
> School takes up 35 of them.
> Meals, sleep, chores take up, say 110 hours.
> Sport training and matches, or whatever—10 hours.
>
> So there are (by these figures) 13 hours left of which independent study claims 10 hours.

A student could go on to argue that as a slow worker he should set aside 12 hours for study outside of class time. At best, students worked out their study schedules with their parents and considered, with them, when it was best to fit in their study. As an aid, along with a short brochure which set out the rationale and the arrangements which were thought to be necessary, students were supplied with a simple planning sheet (time chart) on which they could sketch their time schedules using half hour blocks of time spread over their waking periods of the seven days of the week.

The three-pronged approach was effective, but we had to remind ourselves that the exercise had to be repeated annually, and reviewed with each change of season.

The time chart also provides a useful starting point for part-time students to make serious decisions about their courses, the number of subjects they might attempt with a fair chance of success, and a time pattern which can and should be followed because it fits in with any other commitments they might have (part-time employment etc.). It helps them see the school as a co-operating party that wishes to be helpful.

We had a few difficulties. Some students and their parents were worried at first about a break from the traditional short night by night assignments in three or four subjects. Long assignments needed moderating, and most students found a complex set of tasks daunting at first unless they were given some assistance by their teachers.

But the really significant gain in self-discipline and willingness to 'own' their study and feel responsible for the outcomes, far outweighed any problems. By drawing students into the decision-making processes about their work, they saw that what was required had relevance to their progress. Of course, some were loth to break long habits of not doing anything outside the classroom, but the number in this category was considerably reduced.

Multi-level Classes and Individual Progression

J.I. Goodlad and others have shown a general correlation between the amount a child learns and the time spent at a subject, although the parameters are not as narrow as many teachers think. For example, a syllabus which has long been assigned five periods per week will do just as well with four or six periods. However, the time spent studying a subject outside the classroom does increase the potential to learn more, and for this reason alone, the claims of independent study cannot be ignored.

In the heading we have phrases which encapsulate much of the idealism of educators who have wrestled with the problems which emerge from streaming. If by streaming we envisage a line or set of classes which approach the same course of study with varying success, in a real way, the problems of failure are built in and each class will be a cross-section of the students in a particular age group. Kept together for all of their subjects, even a group with a similar aggregate score will be, for each subject, a genuine mixed-ability class, differing from an unstreamed class or the single class in a small school only in the skew of the distribution.

As retention in the large secondary schools has increased, the range of ability of the students has increased as well, so that the top stream class has become uniquely made up of talented students, while the lower streams contain students whose experience is seldom other than failure. Often, the effect of good teaching of the slower groups is destroyed on test or examination day.

Could not each student progress at his own pace? While the notion has the advantages of humane treatment, and has genuine educational merit, it provides a difficult challenge for teachers.

Those who start with the concept of individual progression as the ideal teaching mode, normally, on social grounds, choose mixed-ability classes. It is usual for the teachers to be very busy and to live constantly with the frustration that they have neither the time nor the energy to contact each child as often as they should. They often find that noise and other distractions make it difficult for them to give individual help.

Across the ability range, the students in the class are spread along a continuum. If they are sub-grouped, the teacher still has a difficult management problem. Kept as individuals, the problems of coping with differences become even more difficult. In practice, most teachers settle for a focus on one group, and teach the class as if all belong to that group. The outcome often lacks challenge and rigour for better students and leads to a 'watered down' approach or compounded failure for the less able students. In trying to cope with individual differences, or even sub-groups, the teachers soon rely highly upon the ability of students to follow (comprehend) written instructions, and this form of guidance often defeats the slower yet conscientious individuals who often make little progress over long periods. In the battle to keep all students properly occupied, presentation tends to become book-based and a study diet is offered that is short in fieldwork, in useful discussion and in practical work.

If the teacher assumes a common progression through a series of graded exercises or topics, sometimes with extension work added to the basic assignment, failure may mean repetition of a unit. The eventuality of having to repeat a section of work is not serious, and can be a formative challenge, until it becomes clear to the student that repetition will probably not bring success. Rules which allow a student to progress to the next unit after repeated failure form an unconvincing basis for advancement.

If slow students are allowed sufficient time to achieve mastery, they are likely to have learned less at the end than they would have done had they covered the topics at the same rate as the more competent students, but at an intellectual level with which they could cope.

Our experience supports the assertions of Stephens and Evans, Glasser, Raven, Purkey and other researchers who insist that repeated failure leads to a lack of confidence and absence of self-esteem which can damn a student for life. But few students of lesser ability are much concerned about the higher intellectual accomplishments of others while they are prospering at their own level with teachers who care for them and respect them as people, and do not by inference, body-language or tone of voice make them feel inferior or unwanted. This observation should not be unexpected, because it is a characteristic of life away from school, and of the adult scene. For example, when technicians are fascinated by the problems which they encounter, they are unlikely to envy engineers whose work has an intellectual complexity beyond their capacity. Only when students are forced into unequal competition, do they exhibit the kind of frustration which leads to personality and health breakdown, or to a decision to reject the whole business of study.

Teachers often form sub-groups of students to save time. Unless the sub-groups are fairly homogeneous, the move is neither helpful to the teacher nor to the student, because general input soon drifts into a situation in which students need individual help. Hence, in the classes of the size for which society is prepared to pay, sub-groups, made up of students with similar competence, provide the best rate of progress.

> For developing . . . self-concept . . . competence and confidence are crucial . . . Competence in many areas, is the school's business. And in the pursuit of that competence, confidence can be destroyed . . . A wholesome self-concept is limited to successes encountered. (Stephens & Evans, 1973, pp. 607 - 610)

We have already identified that, during the secondary years, students' awareness of themselves and appreciation of their current intellect and its power are factors which contribute to personal growth. Within these parameters, we have maintained that each student's study should be characterised by success experiences of increasing complexity and/or intellectual challenge.

In this book, three broad levels of study have been advocated. They are based upon differences in intellectual readiness, and they are backed up by provision for upward movement, whenever that is appropriate. Thus within a mixed-ability class a common introduction to a topic could lead to successful outcomes for all of the students if the questioning and the work which follows takes account of the differences in the level of respective sub-groups of the class. While not easy, through recognition of intellectual differences, it is more manageable than other alternatives.

Individual progression assumes a high level of independence. The research of Alexander and Hines, in *Independent Study in Secondary Schools* (1967), suggests that only about 15% of the students at any level prefer to organise their own work and work alone. Like other students, even this group will need the sort of 'doctor' service and the resources that a learning resource centre, with its staff of teacher-tutors, can offer. It also provides ways of helping the teachers cope with the more complex situations and allows them to attend to one group from time to time without the added pressure from other students. Likewise, at other times, the centre provides an alternative source of help for the student.

This discussion has noted that the multi-level or mixed-ability class holds pedagogical and management problems which most teachers find difficult. In spite of the assistance which can come through the practice of levelling, every class will at times, challenge the teacher to treat separate parts of it in different ways. Hence the *learning resource centre* and the practices of *independent study* must be regarded as essential adjuncts of the classroom if all of the members of *manageable groups* are to reach their potential.

17

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

At Marion, the subdivision of students into levelled groups made it necessary to give over the assessment of a class's work to the teacher of the class. With the leaving (year 11) public examination about to be abolished at the end of 1974, there was considerable debate in the public arena, at that time, about standards. The norm-referencing of the external examination was regarded as largely irrelevant to most students, and the form of the tests was believed to be an inappropriate way of assessing the many subjects which included practical work of some kind. There were people among the Marion High School community who feared the outcome of removing the school's own norm-referenced tests, which took the form of regular examinations. For some it was disquiet about accepting a new responsibility, while for others it meant adapting to new objectives for their subject, and keeping the assessment procedures true to those objectives. Internal testing of a class by its teachers has an expectancy of success about it but, for some, a very successful outcome to a test could only mean poor expectations!

To support the doubting members of staff, bolster poor teachers and satisfy parents, a number of actions were taken:

- The subject faculties were asked to specify their objectives within the guidelines set down by the school (see chapter 7 — Levelling).
- The performances of the classes were monitored by setting criteria for successful performance; e.g. no student should get below 50%, and the class average mark should be above and around 70%. Any departure had to be explained or remedial action taken. A deputy head would give help where it was needed.
- The faculty leader was required to monitor performances and establish an acceptable standard for the faculty. Since most parties were on new ground, especially at the bottom of the ability scale, initiative was needed to make the assessment instruments appropriate. Various indicators were used to reveal possible problems: standard mean mark for the class at any level, distribution of marks, content of assessments, the mark scheme, form of the test, relevance of items compared with stated objectives, morale of the class.
- Teachers were required to allot marks either as an objective score of correct items or on a scale. By varying the maximum mark for an assessed item, exercises with different orders of importance or demand could be weighted accordingly.

At that time the Public Examination Board used grades, and provided a 'hero' for those teachers who favoured the vagaries of C-- . . . C++ etc.

There were many questions which should be addressed. What specific outcomes were expected at the end of a section of work? What test questions or exercises would be valid? What content would be appropriate? Did the test measure what it set out to measure? To what extent were subjective items admissable? What criteria mark a well done project? Could missing-word and multiple-choice questions be made valid?

Overall, to ensure the validity of the measures, considerable attention had to be given to the processes of assessment. One strategy which teachers found helpful, but which easily fell into neglect, was a requirement that their programme of work should be accompanied by a summary of the form of the assessment they proposed to follow. Through this device, much useful discussion could occur ahead of the event that led to better teaching and more helpful forms of evaluation.

It was during this same period that teachers unions were encouraging teachers to be their own masters. Much of the momentum of that movement had gone from Marion by 1974, but the drive for valid assessment among a range of goals set for the school and for a single means of expression revived moves for independence. However, it was not long before a scheme (using marks) autocratically made uniform, became a comfort rather than an obstacle.

By levelling classes, we set in train forces which favoured successful outcomes for students' work. It was important that options were genuinely different, and had their own set of objectives. It was quite unacceptable that one alternative (level) might be no more than a watered down version of another, even when the topic headings were similar or even the same.

It followed that the assessment procedures should correspond closely with the anticipated outcomes of study at each level. Put negatively, some highly prestigious examinations use test items which are neither valid nor reliable. Since students do badly at these tests, it is essential to the aims of levelling that the measures reflect the declared objectives of the course. In practice it is rarely useful to limit the assessment of ‘what was done yesterday, last week, last term', exclusively, to one technique. At a short distance from the class it is not difficult for perceptive teachers to choose suitable measures of their students' progress.

It soon became desirable in 1974 to establish a structure by which all of the marks a student gained during a period of four or five weeks could be added and percentaged by the students at rostered times, and then presented to their parents, who were asked to sign the list. It was expected that the results of a major assignment would be a part of each calculation, but, deliberately, teachers were not asked to fit the rhythm of their teaching to the assessment structure—in fact, they were discouraged from doing so. The students simply included all of the marks they had received during the period. Some teachers assessed at times which were incidental to the ends of assessment periods, while a few made it an issue each time. Either way, it was a discipline to be followed, but flexible enough to suit a wide range of options. By making the calculations and by recording them regularly, students were being encouraged to take an interest in their own progress.

As principal, I wrote a brief encouraging comment on about one third of the records of each assessment and invited about fifty students to discuss a potential problem with me. The ensuing conversations often led to a discussion with the teacher. Occasionally a deep-rooted problem between the teacher and the class, or one or more of its members was unearthed.

Levelling favoured success and as time passed youngsters of all abilities became more concerned to achieve the goals of the topic before them. It was also possible on the basis of the marks or student's comments to offer praise and encouragement to several individual teachers each period. The success motive was working.

We did yield to the pressure to 'examine' at the end of a year. Review tests, which covered items 'to be carried forward to the next year', were taken at the end of the year without long periods of preparation. Most teachers used the period to consolidate the goals for the year. The review test counted roughly as much as two assessment periods in the year's total of marks, or about 20%. The brevity of the tests (about one hour) removed the need to 'stop' the school for 'the exams'.

The teachers calculated the average of marks they allotted to each of their students twice in a year—in second term just prior to the issue of reports and at the end of the year.

In spite of many staff changes over the years, the performances of students have vindicated the structures which were established. But we discovered that unless we kept educating teachers new to the school, and re-educated others, we soon tended to slip back into traditional forms and attitudes.

Upward Mobility and Issue of Standards

Systems throughout the world, with few exceptions, provide only for drop-out into a lower intellectual level of study. While the rhetoric of a system may suggest equality between say vocational and standard academic courses, the matter is complicated by the fact that the public sees the vocational alternative as inferior. Maybe this view has arisen because students often enter alternative courses after an attempt at an academic course has failed, or because direct entrants are frequently students with low socio-economic backgrounds. Prejudices often extend to employers who prefer the elitism associated with pre-tertiary studies to the success of those students whose course has introduced them to many of the skills required for the job.

While an examination of the academic course content and the approach might reveal a lower intellectual demand at the pass level, compared with other courses, paradoxically the pass score in the alternative subjects might be higher than in the academic subjects. Which is superior? A 40% (adjusted to 50%) achievement mark at a norm-referenced examination of an academic kind with a high emphasis upon recall, or a pass minimum 80% mark accuracy in the solution of a practical problem, in the form of a model which required near perfection in the use of a set of skills *and* a high degree of intellectual interpretation. Alternatively, which is superior? An 80% achievement based upon 60% of a course or 50% achievement for the full course? And so on.

These suppositions serve to suggest that the matter of general standards across the board rests upon vague and contradictory bases and avoids any attempt to interpret the intellectual factors which provide the criteria for levelling.

But the matter goes further. Now that we know considerably more about the mechanics and chemistry of the human brain, it is time to revise our expectations of students in a particular year, based as they are on the achievements of the upper echelons of students. They have been gleaned by years of trial and error. It is not unreasonable to provide systems within which students are allowed to use the intellectual power they have at any one moment, but with the equal right to exploit new powers when they are ready.

Thus it may not be too long before senior students are given greater opportunity, not only to select subjects, but also the level at which they will study them, on the basis of their own judgement of their capacity to succeed.

In this State, the sometimes maligned school leavers' statement,with its profile of characteristics and achievements, stands strong alongside attempts to extend the formal examination system. This trend is already apparent in England and elsewhere, where the formal set of examinations is giving way to personal profiles as a solution to the no-win, heated debates about the values of marks, so-called academic status, and a demand for comparative standards of accreditation across a wide range of unrelated subjects and groups of students with very different capacities, backgrounds and plans for their future.

These considerations should be subordinate to approaches which promote high self-esteem among students. The down-putting practices of externally devised grading systems, which describe students as good, fair, or poor, should be avoided. The greatest opposition will probably come from 'system people' (professional educators and assessors) who are reluctant to relinquish their monopoly over certification.

Kjell Eide, under secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Education, has spoken out strongly on this point. He believes that 'instead of forcing upon pupils its view of what is right and what is relevant, the school in future can only maintain its position by acting as a really useful agent to young people'. (Eide cited in *Coventry Consultative Document*, 1982, p.41) He asserts that, although the reluctance of educators and education systems to allow students freedom to move among a range of alternatives is related to the strength of the professional monopoly of the accreditation system, 'it seems unlikely that certification . . . can be maintained. It seems fairly safe to assume that the selective role of the school will be strongly modified in the future'. (Coventry, 1982, p.43) Our experience strongly supports his analysis. Many students who entered Marion to study at a particular level showed a sound capacity to choose appropriate points at which to re-enter formal study and finally succeeded at much higher levels. They demonstrated how unnecessary various prerequisites proved to be when reasonable support was available. Eide foresees much more negotiation between teachers and students, and assumes that senior students have the right and the capacity to make the final decisions about their study programme. While Marion and its students had to work within parameters set outside the school, the freedom we could allow has illustrated the high level of accountability of students, and the limitations of teachers as counsellors, except as one of the possible sources of information and general guidance.

Senior Secondary School Accreditation

A school might offer:

- a graduation certificate
- the school leavers' statement
- the certificate of the Secondary Schools Assessment Board of South Australia, or an internal examination certificate, at the end of year 12
- other specific awards

If the basic intention is to provide students with a broad picture of their school career, each document refers to a different aspect of schooling and any apparent overlap will be more in terms of their complementary nature, than in fact.

The certificate of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA), carries the results of year 12 examinations conducted by that Board. The school leavers' statement is an official Education Department document which summarises a student's achievements at school, and provides a personal reference. The graduation certificate can be awarded to all students who satisfactorily complete their studies to the end of the fifth year, according to the general requirements of the school, and specifically with regard to such matters as commitment of time, attendance at classes and completion of set tasks. Other awards may be offered by the school or some outside agency from time to time for satisfactory performance at some task or event in the life of the school.

When we approach the issues of accreditation of student achievement, we realize that SSABSA is only concerned with year 12 and currently only about 35% of each age group. The remaining 65% have either left school before the assessment (examination) time or, in a growing minority of cases, they are students for whom SSABSA studies are inappropriate.

It is very likely, in the short term of say, five years, that SSABSA will not do much more than express the existing accreditation procedures onto one piece of paper. It is to be hoped that arrangement which offers a wider range of subjects and 50% of the mark based on school-based assessment will encourage more students to stay on for the twelfth year at a school or at more than one institution for either part-time or full-time study which may or may not be recognised by SSABSA. The procedures must also take account of the achievements of students who have left school before the end of year 12.

In recent years, a number of schools have introduced some form of graduation ceremony for those students who have completed year 12. Without exception, the attendance of students and parents on these occasions has been excellent, and in those cases where a graduation certificate has been presented, the award has been sought-after by the recipients. Maybe this is a 'hang-over' from the old days, when intermediate and leaving certificates earned in the previous year were presented on speech night; but regardless of the reason, there is clear support, and in some cases, demand, for some form of recognition that the student has completed the full five years of study.

While there is some criticism of the school leavers' statement, the main problems appear to be in the different interpretation schools give to the various descriptions of achievement.

If these documents become part of a general framework, public bias might give way to confidence in a well-understood and acceptable scheme in which local school-based studies will share validity along with subject awards decided externally.

The collection of awards is consistent with the purposes of the comprehensive secondary school because it recognises the personal qualities and the diversity of achievements of students. It seems that our State, like many others around the world, is not ready to have confidence in school-based awards alone, but it is equally true that the public wants more than an external certificate. Those who favour a centralised monopoly have yielded to pressure to include a 50% school component in the calculation. This concession must not become a political measure that degrades other elements.

> It requires a change of attitude towards the learner by the teacher so as to see the student as a person with whom to negotiate individual learning experiences and needs. (Coventry, 1982, p.43)

There is no doubt in my mind that Marion could not have supported the full range of student abilities and interests it has done if it had allowed the public examinations to restrict its reponses to young people. Not only did more students stay for the full five years, but the number who succeeded at the top levels also increased. This apparent paradox is explained in terms of student self-esteem, self-confidence and the motivation which accompanies rigour and the expectation that students grow in intellectual competence in a favourable supportive atmosphere.

18

STUDENTS — GIFTED AND NOT SO GIFTED

A parent said:

> I wish my child needed remedial help,—and not help with the problem of being gifted. At least we would get some sympathy and probably some help. It is almost impossible to get either for a child who suffers from the problem of being gifted.

At the ends of the ability graph (chapter 1) for school students there are two groups which do not completely fit the normal subject-based structure. At one end there is the group of students who are especially gifted intellectually, while at the other, there is a group of similar size who are much less able to cope with intellectual matters. By natural selection of the school population, Marion had its share of students in both categories. Our willingness to minister to their special needs brought additional students into each group. The contributions of both groups, soon made us appreciate their special qualities.

Gifted and Talented

Since 1923, when Louis Terman saw giftedness in terms of IQ test scores, the debate over what constitutes an accurate and acceptable definition of giftedness has gone on unabated. In practical terms, it is sufficient to think of 'giftedness' essentially as potential for significantly superior performance in any of the areas of intellectual function. The school had a population who found it appropriate to experience specific intellectual challenge as part of its daily diet (we called them 'advanced level students'—see chapter 7). However, it is important when we identify students who are gifted and have capacity for intellectual excellence in several or all academic areas, to distinguish them from those who exhibit a particular talent and show intense interest in some field.

It is an important principle that the students who are deemed to be gifted, talented or 'advanced' *perform* very well. The tendency of some teachers to base their judgement upon irrelevant criteria, (e.g., neat presentation, thorough recall, intellectual potential, enthusiasm, very high productivity) has been one defect which has led to the failure of many schemes.

Hence, a school needs to wrestle with the selection procedures and to stay with the decisions until they are proved inappropriate. One simple fact is that children of outstanding calibre need less time to achieve the normal outcomes. Once the students have been identified as specially talented, the use of their spare time for more advanced pursuits should be legitimated.

Marion has a long tradition by which the brightest students have always been encouraged to do well at public examinations. Since 1974, when we first sought to respond to the whole range of abilities, expectations and interests, teaching at the advanced level was arranged specifically to stimulate and develop the higher academic skills of the top 15% of the students.

However, during 1976, we detected a small group, perhaps 5% or one-third of the advanced students, but probably fewer, who were not really being tested. Tentative experiments offered a small number of year 9 mathematics students with outstanding ability, the opportunity to develop their talents with the help of the Sturt College of Advanced Education computer and associated courses. Two boys sat for and passed a second year computing science unit with comparative ease. How drab school mathematics must be for such students! During the same period, bridging (i.e. multi-discipline) exercises enabled a small number of year 10 students to produce work of remarkably high standard. Although the number of students in the category was small, it was significant. Their excellence was usually specific to one subject or another, so that there was no reason to make a full-time separation of these people from the existing organisation of students. In any case, first-hand guidance from Toronto and other places described in the literature, casts serious doubts upon the wisdom of separating gifted students from the total student body on anything like a full-time basis.

In 1977 we set out to try a scheme by which outstanding students (and their friends) could engage in special projects designed with the help of appropriate staff. An amount of two thousand dollars was set aside in the budget to cover special costs. A senior master was designated to lead a staff team whose job was to identify and co-ordinate the activities of these students, to be responsible for basic arrangements and to assess the project. A small number of students participated, some with spectacular success. But there were others whose response was less than we had anticipated.

Our early attempts to help the gifted students in the school was sometimes thwarted by teachers and parents. By no means all of the teachers responded favourably to the idea of providing special challenges for the most able. From the outset of 'levelling' (chapter 7) some teachers were uncomfortable about teaching even the same syllabus outline to 'advanced' classes in ways that challenged the superior intellectual capacity of the students. The difficulty increased when it was suggested that the most able proportion of these students leave the classroom for a block of lessons each week to undertake alternative tasks. While they claimed that the students could not afford to depart from the set syllabus, I believe that often, the real reason was a fear that the students might gain expertise in a subject area outside their experience. The belief that teachers must appear to know 'everything' in their subject area, is still held by some people both within and outside the profession. On one occasion, for example, a teacher (a scholar in his own right) responded to complaints from students in his year 9 English class that the texts were too simple, by choosing books normally set for students two years older. Although the students responded admirably and found the work no more difficult than a reasonable challenge, there was an angry reaction from several other teachers. Some parents feared that any departure from the set syllabuses might detract from their children's examination performances, even though those tests might be two or three years away.

I had discovered in 1978 that attempts to help the gifted in several overseas countries were faring little better than we had managed. The essential impression was that many schemes to accelerate gifted students have failed because the high specialisation which results is too narrow to serve the student's social and intellectual needs. It is interesting to note that disciplines like music and art, which have tended to segregate these outstanding people at an early age, have drawn away from this practice as other schools have developed strong departments for those subjects. But Vancouver Technical School, in Canada, provided one bright spot where the curriculum included special short courses which had been designed to encourage very able students to develop their intellectual skills to a level above the norm, and to create original pieces of work.

In 1982, Marion sent a carefully selected group of its teachers to Victoria to examine the different ways in which Melbourne schools, with the support of their Gifted and Talented Task Force, were catering for students with exceptional ability. We found much of value, particularly the role of Rusden College which provided a wide range of courses for gifted students. However, we found significant points of warning which we took into account in developing the six-weekly courses which constitute the current extension of the programme that we introduced. If they became 'interest' groups, (and other interested students sought entry), the intellectual level at which these courses operated, had to decline because the students were individuals, and probably belonged to different age groups and levels of maturity. When that happened, the challenge was lost for the people for which it was set up.

My overseas experience had warned me against forming an annexe. An experimental programme in Toronto had failed for two reasons. By taking the students out of the main-stream of school society—it made the social problems more difficult and placed pressure on the student to appear to be gifted in everything ('even cleaning his teeth' as one teacher put it), and—it tended to overlook that these students, like all others, needed to learn the introductory skills, and gain basic information about the topics they were studying.

The leaders also had trouble with parents who, for status reasons, wanted their children to be in the annexe. By exerting political pressure, the parents gained access for their children, and threatened the programme. An attempt to form 'Saturday clubs' to which the brightest students from a group of schools were invited, faltered for the same reason. The clubs progressed well as clubs, but did little for the gifted.

As a result of these investigations and our own experience in the field, we were able to define our policy: only those who could demonstrate that they had time available during the school week, because they were easily coping with all of the study required of them, and were performing at a very high level, were eligible for the group. When outstanding talent existed in a particular area (for example, art) the student would be considered *if* he or she was coping

Figure 11.

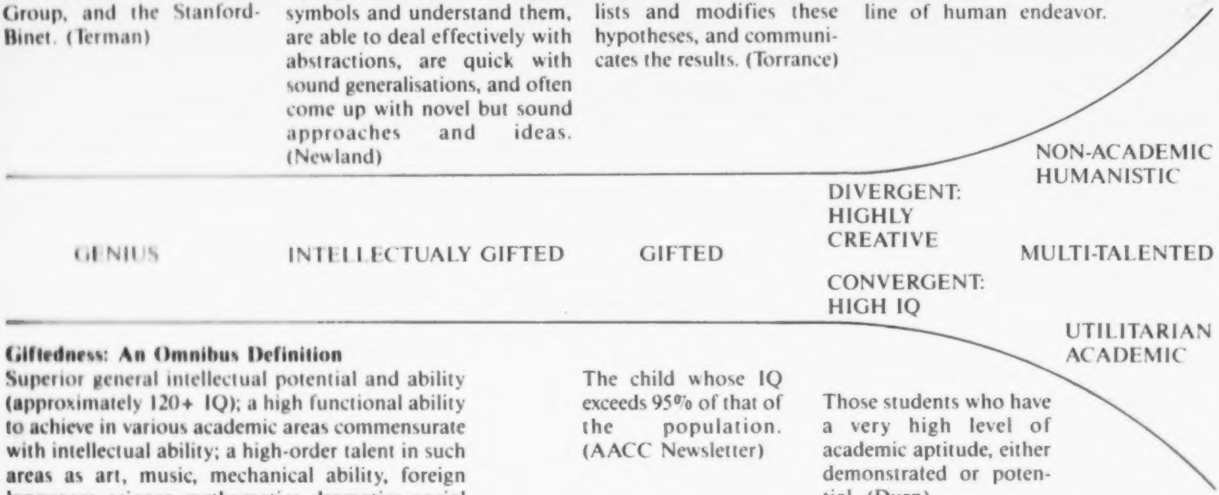
CHANGING CONCEPTION OF THE NATURE OF GIFTEDNESS

Ability to make a high score on such intelligence tests as the National, the Terman Group, and the Stanford-Binet. (Terman)

Those who are able to quickly grasp concepts of greater difficulty are able to acquire symbols and understand them, are able to deal effectively with abstractions, are quick with sound generalisations, and often come up with novel but sound approaches and ideas. (Newland)

One who senses problems or gaps in information, forms ideas or hypotheses, lists and modifies these hypotheses, and communicates the results. (Torrance)

One who shows consistently remarkable performance in any worthwhile line of human endeavor.



Giftedness: An Omnibus Definition
Superior general intellectual potential and ability (approximately 120+ IQ); a high functional ability to achieve in various academic areas commensurate with intellectual ability; a high-order talent in such areas as art, music, mechanical ability, foreign languages, science, mathematics, dramatics, social leadership, and creative writing, and a creative ability to develop a novel event in the environment. (Flegler)

The child whose IQ exceeds 95% of that of the population. (AACC Newsletter)

Those students who have a very high level of academic aptitude, either demonstrated or potential. (Durn)

Victorian Education Department, 1981

well with all the other academic demands. It is difficult enough to define giftedness, but even harder to identify it in students. For year 8, the matter was determined by the amount of time the students had on their hands after they had completed all of their work excellently. Following instruction in the intellectual skills of problem solving, they spent their spare time solving mathematical and language problems. But for students in the remaining years the content of the diagram supplied by the Victorian Education Department (1981) in its publication *A Teachers Guide—Gifted and Talented Children* proved to be very helpful.

We accepted the Victorian definitions of various levels of giftedness, plus the statistic, that 1 - 2% of children are gifted. We then began the hard-headed exercise of cutting a list of nominations with about 15 - 20 names in each year down to no more than 4 (out of 200+). The last stage of this process took teachers away from classroom excellence into considerations about mental capacity. Those whose names were placed on the final list were not always top of their class though we found that they did better in classwork once they were spending less time in class. We were indebted to the Victorian Education Department (1981) for useful sets of criteria and for procedures which were based on the suggestions of John C. Gowan (San Fernando College, California). The procedure takes into consideration multiple criteria and pares screening costs and time to a minimum.

STEP 1

Select an approximate percentage of the students for the programme depending on school wishes and value judgements.

STEP 2

Use a group test screen and cut at a point which will give 5%. Take the top tenth of this group and put them into the programme without further testing. Put the rest of the group into a reservoir.

STEP 3

Ask each classroom teacher to nominate the

- best student
- child with the largest vocabulary
- most creative and original child
- child with the most leadership
- most scientifically oriented child
- child who does the best critical thinking
- able child who is the biggest nuisance
- most motivated child
- child the other children like best
- child who is most ahead on grade placement
- brightest minority group child in the class, if there are more than five and one has not been named already
- child whose parents are most concerned about increasing the enrichment of his educational progress.
- add these children to the reservoir.

STEP 4

Use an achievement battery and cut at a point which will yield 3%. Make a list of all students who are in the top tenth in numerical skills. Add both of these lists to the reservoir.

STEP 5

Together with the principal, curriculum staff, and guidance staff, plus a few teachers, make a list of children who

- have held leadership positions
- achieved outstandingly in any special skill
- are the best representatives of minority groups
- have influential parents
- have reading difficulties but are believed bright
- are believed bright but may be emotionally disturbed
- has been recommended by any single individual for the programme

Put these children into the reservoir.

STEP 6

Rank all pupils in the reservoir according to the number of times they have been mentioned.

STEP 7

Automatically include all children mentioned three or more times.

STEP 8

Administer an individual IQ test to all children mentioned twice. Determine the individual IQ equivalent for the percentage cut and place any child above the cut in the programme

STEP 9

Review all students remaining in the reservoir and evaluate each individual. (Victorian Education Department, 1981)

Because of the technical problems associated with the administration of IQ tests, we were never able to include step 8. We were forced to rely on teachers' ability—perhaps suspect—to identify the students with very high intelligence.

At first, teachers were fearful that performances would fall off if students were absent from class. The opposite was the case. Once operative, we noted that the performance of gifted students tended to lift. They also had gifted friends, and friends who were content to follow their lead. The first group was encouraged to join in. The 'followers' were aware of their limitations and provided no problems.

We met with the parents of the students we had chosen. After they had been given a brief outline of the programme, the parents would go on to discuss the social problems a brilliant student has to confront. As a result the group members, and their parents did bolster each other when they were faced with cruel comment.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE

A casual observer could be excused for believing that additional programmes were not required because a number of things were being done especially for the most able youngsters within their classes. However more was needed:

- *Special course options*
  Students could opt for a range of 6 week courses (2 - 3 hours/week) mounted by various people in the school or associated with it, or people in tertiary or similar institutions (e.g. Art Gallery of South Austalia). They might take one or more of each series—obliged only to complete any course for which they had enrolled.
  The first set of options, which comprised the following alternatives, gave an indication of the sort of choices that have been offered for each of four half-term programmes since the project was introduced:
  'Mathematician's Delight'
  Genes and Differentiation
  Unearthing Sources
  The Art Gallery—Insights into the Arts

Personnel of Flinders University, South Australian College of Advanced Education (Sturt campus), South Australian Art Gallery, a freelance writer, a retired teacher/scholar, and a current member of staff, made up the staff resource. They all gave their services voluntarily, generously and without expecting to be paid.

- *Leisure activities of a highly intellectual kind*
  While some may want to narrow our programme to this section and regard the other sections as peripheral, we maintained that the most able students in the school should have the chance to find stimulation of an intellectual kind both through highly testing formal courses and in recreational activity
  - *Dungeons and Dragons*
    This is just one of many games which has a knowledge base and which provides an opportunity for students to develop various intellectual skills. It was seen as a way of providing a social setting for the intellectually elite.
  - *Computer games*
    A programme such as this one challenged able students to order their lives so that their various responsibilities and interests could be accommodated. There was a deliberate element of choice and it consciously encouraged and took into account that some of the students had interests away from school.

The school budget allowed a significant amount of money to support projects. (Students were required to contract for its use, fulfil the plan they had negotiated and present an audited detailed account of all expenditure). So that a wider programme could be offered and to add to the number of 'gifted' students, a small group of neighbouring schools, government and independent, was invited to join, only conditional upon their acceptance of the rules including those about selection of students of high calibre.

A degree of excitement soon replaces 'fear of the unknown', as genuine stimulation is achieved by leaders who ensure that their approaches are intellectually challenging. Gifted youngsters need more than a mentor. They require an operational structure and the help of adults (school staff and others) who are able to facilitate contacts with significant people in other institutions (e.g. universities, art galleries, museums). Giftedness is not necessarily allied with initiative, nor is it a certain key to opportunity. Boys and girls who were born in the area of the school gave a lead to the others across the full gamut of alternatives. For example, a Dutch boy, whose English was as yet not fluent had been rightly identified as a most outstanding student. Another performed at a high level, particularly in the arts, and our assessment was substantiated by the education officer at the Art Gallery of South Australia. A student, removed from another school because of his bad behaviour, revealed evidence of outstanding ability. Students from other schools soon caught the spirit of the programme.

Under the leadership of a deputy principal, Marion selected suitable students, set up and monitored the programme and built up a support staff. Teachers of advanced classes, teachers with particular enthusiasms and talents, and teachers with specific support roles actively provided ideas to be taken up. Constant pooling of resources, and more and more community involvement, enabled a diverse programme to continue. Now, special education advisers provide some courses and, at its own instigation, Marion has gained the co-operation of seven other schools, government and private. The opportunity that is given to this relatively small population of students to share with each other across school boundaries has proved to be an important factor in the success of the scheme.

By the end of the first year, a pattern evolved that confirmed that the programme needed all three components:

- A challenge to intellectual activity through access to knowledge, and the capacity to work through problems related to its acquisition.
- Room for individual negotiation to follow up areas of interest.
- A leisure component.

It was also clear that the programme could operate vertically across year levels when the enthusiasts so wished. The learning resource centre provided an ideal base where the needs of the gifted were among those which were identified for support for the co-ordinator and her staff. It was a setting in which talented students were provided with opportunities to stimulate their intellect and imagination. We had begun with 'Dungeons and Dragons' and, through this intellectually challenging and often socially co-operative game, students met the challenge of new ideas.

One of the aims of the games component had been to encourage the students to use their own time. In the process, on the fringe, students with ability, yet performing well below their level, had been identified, e.g. Harry who had been frequently absent for trivial reasons. He wanted to be included. A contract was made stating that if he met particular requirements in mathematics, science and English, he could enter. He met our expectations and joined in. Hence the learning centre came to serve the gifted in another way. It helped us identify very able young people who were not giving evidence of their ability through their performances in their classes. No longer bored through idleness and lack of challenge, these students soon showed that their intellect was of a high calibre.

As a basis for evaluation a check list provided by S. Fuelop, 1980, (South Australian Education Department Special Education Unit—'Gifted Students') has been useful.

Table 5

What is Enrichment?

What Enrichment is:	What Enrichment is not:
• productive thinking	• reproductive thinking
• applying and associating learning to other areas	• accumulating and regurgitating information about one area
• learning concepts and generalisations	• learning facts
• complex thinking	• harder work
• extend and/or replace traditional learning experiences	• provide more work
• interrelating information learned	• separate entity learning
• critically evaluate	• accept all data presented
• problem seeking	• answering questions
• future-oriented enquiry	• present-oriented information
• experiences or activities that are above and beyond the core curriculum	• more of the same

Students with Few Intellectual Gifts

These lovable youngsters needed the same considerations as the gifted group. They could and should have been integrated in some classes where their talent enabled them to cope, while, outside the integrated area, they had special needs:

- small group organisation and individual instruction
- social support including a special adult (teacher) with whom they could relate
- a wide range of activities, necessitating a vast variety of human and material resources
- experiences which challenged them but enabled them to succeed.

While many schools were complaining about the possibility of having students of this level of competence, for the benefit of us all, we deliberately arranged to add to our number, a group of secondary age youngsters from the Ashford Special School for intellectually disabled children. They did their survival skill work with their home-room specially trained teacher. Many of the skills which were learned in the grounds, also doubled as service to the school (e.g. mowing lawns, looking after animals). Each child had a strength and it was usually possible to arrange for all of the youngsters to join classes where they could be normal members of the group. With this kind of incentive they became 'ready' more quickly than previous evidence suggested that they may have done.

Another group of students, who were not judged to qualify for a place in a special school, were enrolled in the normal way. These youngsters often had a very bad self-concept and a reputation for tantrums, running away and so on. The behaviour problem had arisen out of the frustration of not being able to cope with many of their classes, so we sought to treat the frustration rather than the bad behaviour.

Our judgement was correct. Put into a supportive environment where they were expected to do things within the compass of their ability, they exhibited fewer bad traits. Hence we separated them for the abstract work—number, reading and writing. Within a concrete context of making things and doing things of a simple and practical nature, their teacher taught them number, and reading. Opportunities were found to teach them the skills needed to make simple records or prepare uncomplicated messages on paper. The outcome was good. The learning resource centre provided the basic facilities.

As confidence grew, their view of themselves became more appropriate and realistic. Through the exercise of their strengths they came to appreciate their own talents. The presence of the Ashford group helped teachers to get a better perspective of the capabilities of 'basic level' students and the techniques which were most likely to stimulate learning.

VIEW OF OTHER STUDENTS

The mass of students soon ceased to take advantage of these youngsters. As part of a homestead, all students had opportunities to learn to love them, to care for them when that was necessary and to deal with patches of conflict. In this way those who belonged to the very slow group became contributors to the school in ways which enabled them to merge with the student body. Their generous, happy spirits were increasingly appreciated. And their tendency to be outgoing about their successes and their simple honesty helped many students and teachers to identify these qualities in others.

19

ASSISTANCE TO DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Around Australian secondary schools

> current arrangements encourage 'bookish' approaches in schools. They force parents to be ambivalent about any curriculum change which they quite clearly see as intrinsically better; but perhaps instrumentally worse, affecting a child's chances to 'get to the top'. Moreover, the traditional curriculum and its links with elite faculties (or tertiary institutions) favours children from certain home backgrounds and schools, not necessarily those who would make the best professionals. (Collins, 1983, p.42)

In this brief paragraph, Collins implies disadvantage for masses of students—would he include all *except* those who have special competence for 'bookish learning' *and* a middle-class background? Such a list would include students with a bent for the physical skills, with poor parents, with special language problems, and able students without tertiary ambitions. I think it might include those who have serious physical or intellectual disabilities. It might include students with ambitions to study subjects which are not available or are sneeringly referred to as 'mickey mouse' by narrow-minded traditionalists, those with poor listening skills, or impatience with 'talk and chalk', or difficulties getting homework done. Some might be disadvantaged simply because they dislike the school environment, have trouble with a teacher, have a poor image of themselves, or have values and attitudes which their school rejects, or discourages.

In this chapter, I will describe how a school might attempt to remove the disadvantage from students who are in one or other of those categories. Each programme should be integrated into the main context of the school. The idea of total separation is rejected because, for the disadvantaged, there is one essential about the outcome, namely, that the student can be, or can become accepted. For example, a disturbed child must be able to enter 'normal' classes, once the 'disturbance' has been overcome; a gifted child can identify with his or her peers by sharing in some of their activities and subjects.

Students of Non-English Speaking Background

Students, born in non-English speaking countries or from families where one or both parents come from abroad, usually speak a language other than English. The foreign tongue is often the main one spoken, chiefly to enable efficient communication to occur between the children and their parents. The students have two language needs—special help with the use of the English language, and the opportunity to maintain their native tongue. Endemic in the latter is a desire to keep their culture alive.

THE EXTENT OF THE PROJECT

The number of students at Marion from non-English speaking backgrounds has slowly risen over the years and it has not been uncommon for students to come long distances to partake of the benefits we could offer. In 1984, Marion enrolled 384 students for whom English was their second language. As the table shows, no group was so dominant as to deserve special attention. Thus it was the policy of the school to provide for every one of these students irrespective of the numbers. Since gaining competence in English was the main need (in terms of time), the economics of the situation were reasonable.

Table 6

Origins of parents of ethnic students, and student numbers

Austria	4	Germany-Holland	4
Cambodia	31	Papua New Guinea-France	1
China	17	Czechoslovakia-Estonia	1
Cyprus	4	Spain-Indonesia	1
Czechoslavakia	1	Yugoslavia-Hungary	1
France	3	Holland-Yugoslavia	2
Germany	28	Italy-Yugoslavia (Croatia)	2
Greece	93	Latvia-Germany	1
Holland	25	Lithuania-Greece	1
Hong Kong	1	Thailand-Malaysia	2
Hungary	2	Latvia-Yugoslavia	1
Indonesia	5	Germany-Switzerland	1
Italy	30	Germany-Hungary	1
Japan	4	Germany-Czechoslovakia	1
Latvia	4	Hungary-Austria	1
Lebanon	4	Poland-Belgium	1
Lithuania	2	France-Germany	1
Malaysia	25	China-Vietnam	5
Philippines	3	Holland-Indonesia	1
Poland	13	Ukraine-Switzerland	1
Portugal	5	Austria-Germany	1
Russia	1		31
Singapore	1		
Sri Lanka	2		
Switzerland	1		
Syria	2		
Turkey	1		
Ukrania	3		
Vietnam	20		
Yugoslavia	18		
	353		

PARENTAL AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The programme takes account of the expectations of both the parents and their children and ensures parent support. In general, the parents of these children have a view of education which has all or most of the following characteristics:

- They have high hopes for the outcome.
- They fear that competence in English will distract their children from their native tongue.
- They want their children to be competent in their native language.
- They want their children to do all the things that other children do to get on at school.

Hence native language teaching encourages parental support. Apart from the desires of their parents, it was sound educational enterprise because it remains a good thing for the children to preserve their language and culture. And grammatical competence in their own language and the capacity to use it for a range of oral and written purposes does help them to develop competence in English.

But it is quite illogical

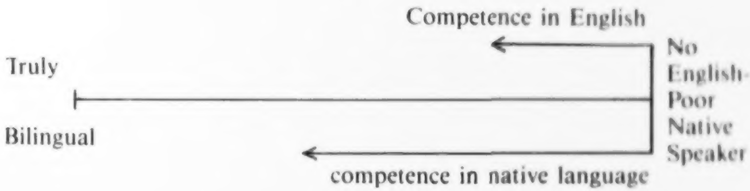
- for children to be in class with other children doing all the same subjects, *and*,
- for the children to learn their own language without using extra time.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHILD

Children in year 8 and year 9 (and year 7, I believe), badly want to be like other children and study almost anything except their family language. While students in years 10 - 12 usually treasure their own language and culture, they understand the need for competence in English.

We set out to key students into language teaching as late as their ability and competence would allow and to use their native language as a vehicle for improving their English. If the children (and their parents) chose to be taught their family language in year 8 and/or year 9, either it would be an extra subject to be taken after school, when it was very likely that the children would rebel, or include their family language study and keep all of the subjects, but reduce the time and content allotted to some of them. In the upper school community, they could choose languages as normal options among all of the other subjects available to them.

Figure 12.



So many factors influence the ability of students to use English and their own tongue that they are spread along the entire continuum of abilities. In practice, the successful student needs a better command of English than of the native tongue. As a school subject and for assessment purposes the native language would be equated with the progress of an Anglo-student after five hundred hours of instruction, spread over five years of secondary schooling.

ENGLISH FOR NON—ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Reading, writing, listening and speaking skills might be at very different levels of competence among English-second language students compared with relatively even achievement in each aspect by English (first-language) speakers. Thus the task was a complicated one, because we were not dealing with a homogeneous group. It warranted a senior in charge of all the programmes and activities for students with non-English speaking backgrounds. At Marion we were fortunate to obtain the appointment of Jürgen Kracht, a migrant with a natural understanding of the problems facing these students. He is also a very kindly person who quickly gets to know his charges very well and takes a personal interest in each of them.

> "There are students who know hardly any English, some who are halting in the tongue and some whose English is excellent. . . The problem is how to cater adequately for them all". (Hannaford & Kracht, 1980)

This kind of pastoral care has also been extended in the multi-cultural centre at the school. A small suite of rooms, situated in the heart of the school, quickly becomes a home-base where these students are sure that their problems with language will be understood.

Migrant students who are 'new arrivals', and who know practically no English, spend approximately half of their time, at first, taking special English lessons and the rest in normal classes. As their English improves, this ratio is changed until they are finally able to follow the normal school time-table. The length of time this process takes varies with the ability and dedication of the individual student, but since the motivation is strong it is not uncommon to find that they achieve this success within twelve to fifteen months.

For these students, the second phase of learning English consists of expanding their vocabulary as they work at several subjects, mixing with other students and undertaking a course of precise translation of their own language into and from English.

Improvement in English naturally leads to better performances in other subjects until there is no evidence of any deficit or retardation. In fact these migrant students appear to be able to read, write, speak, hear and use English as well as conventional English-speaking students with equal intelligence. It is also worth noting that, since the students join existing classes and courses, or form full classes for instruction in English, the only monetary cost of providing instruction in English is for the intensive course at the beginning and for the general support given in the multi-cultural centre.

NATIVE LANGUAGES FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

By 1981, besides teaching French, German and Japanese to English-speakers and any others who were interested, we were offering instruction in nine other languages. The table shows the number of students, the time spent on each language and the various year levels at which they were taught. In addition, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Ukranian students were enrolled in courses outside the school and they were given time off during the school day to compensate for this. While the detail varies, the programme has a similar appearance each year.

Table 7

Scope of Community Languages at Marion High School (1981)

Language	Years	Minutes per week	Number of students
Italian	8–11	100	13
	12	240	5
Modern Greek	8–9	120	17
	10–11	120	14
	11–12	160	10
Dutch	12	120	2
Russian	12	120	3
Serbo-Croatian	9–11	60	6
Malaysian	12	60	25
Vietnamese	11–12	120	13
Chinese	9–11	160	9
	11–12	160	13

All of the languages listed, are examined by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia in the matriculation examinations and we strongly recommend that students at this level take their native language as one of their year 12 subjects. The school assessed the best time for this study to be taken up, and the amount of time needed for it. We found that Italian students, for instance, often spoke a local dialect and therefore needed more time to learn the Italian which is examined. This pattern is justified by the policy of the external examining body which requires that good English also be used in the foreign language examinations. Hence many students who study their own language for only one to two hours per week have a time space for special instruction in English for another two hours. (In general, the greater the students' command of their own language, the more time they need to spend on English and vice-versa.) These requirements give status to the subject and a double benefit to the students—studies in their own tongue and the command of English they need for further study and general purposes in an English speaking society.

PROVISION OF TEACHERS

In the first instance, teachers of native languages were paid by the school. But once the programme was recognized by the Education Department and the Federal Government, we were able to obtain government grants to employ hourly-paid instructors. The total of these grants was about half the cost of one teacher and that was for the instruction of approximately 130 students in six to eight languages—low cost and high effectiveness are an unusual combination!

PARENTAL SUPPORT

From among the non-English speaking parents of many of its students, the school recruited an ethnic advisory committee to foster the study and spread of the various elements of the cultures they represented. Through its representative the committee advises the school council and the school on matters pertaining to the needs of their students. Coffee nights are arranged at the beginning of each year to meet the parents of new students, tell them about the school and generally make them feel welcome. We also invite the parents of established students to share with new parents, make suggestions, clarify our practices or plans, raise what appear to be problems and help to make the newcomers feel a part of the school.

The committee also organizes a food and music festival each year and displays of their arts, crafts, their music and their dances. These events generate, throughout the whole school and its neighbourhood, a sense of tremendous excitement which is discernible for weeks beforehand and reaches its climax at the festival itself where there is a very happy mingling of hundreds of people of all ages and many nationalities including Anglo-Australians. Added to a steady input of items throughout the year the school community is able to appreciate many facets of a large number of cultures.

CONCLUSIONS

Dunn, (1970, p.139), asks whether schools have succeeded in making students from different cultures feel important, wanted, and able to contribute to the richness of our way of life. He questions the adequacy of attempts to help migrant students and their parents master English. We could not be satisfied that enough progress had been made. However, many young people are leaving the school with a greater command of two languages and a reasonable working knowledge of one or two others. Students from overseas are achieving at levels comparable with other students. For example, the overall improvement in matriculation results in the school generally reflects an even greater improvement in the results of the students with non-English speaking backgrounds to the point where this group as a whole now outscores the other students. The prize lists are dominated by their names.

The number of these students enrolling at Marion has increased markedly and is still going up (this is particularly true of the Asian groups), a sure indicator of its public approval. But the benefits have flowed in more than one direction. The school itself has been enormously enriched by the presence of its immigrant students and the communities they represent. Barriers of intolerance have been broken down and a better attitude is surely being carried out into the general community. It is difficult to think of a better justification for any school programme.

Physically Handicapped

To make our school community more nearly a microcosm of society, we sought to include a small number of physically handicapped students in the school. While we were seldom without at least one such person, it was not until 1984 that the project received proper recognition, and eight physically handicapped persons were enrolled. The school has tried to respond to their special needs, and I like to believe that we have been successful. Through their homestead care projects, all have been helped by experiencing, on the one hand, the lives of disadvantaged people at first hand, and on the other, the personal gains from living and working among a more complete cross-section of society.

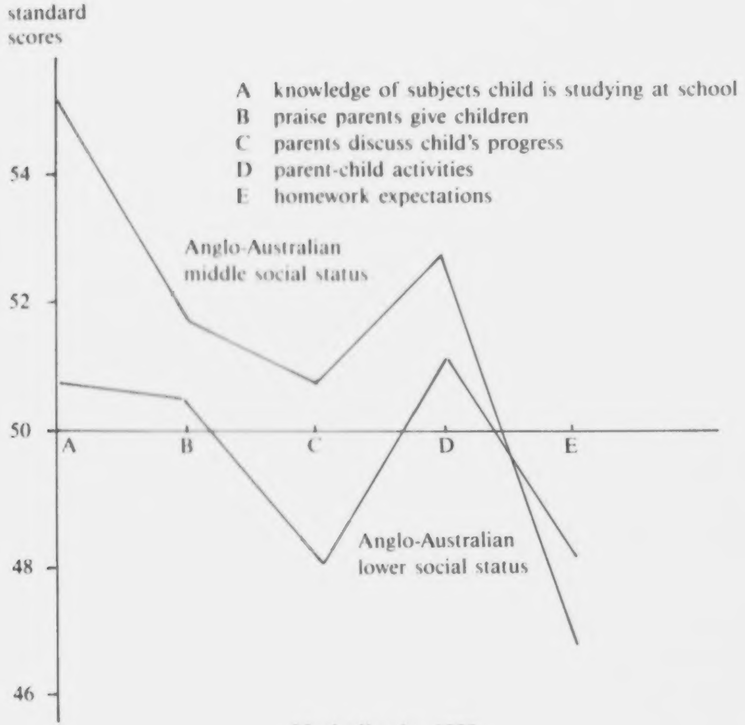
The school's approach to its programme of studies made it natural for the handicapped student to take on a suitable work load. The staff has opportunities to master more of the management skills needed to teach a complex group than is often the case, so that the right atmosphere has been created for these students to be accepted about the school.

I believe that handicapped students help the school too. They are always a joy to have about. It is also a pleasure to see the way other students respond to them. Their physical needs are symbolic of the care a teacher must have for every child. The reminders they provide each day to both students and staff, are significant in the development of caring behaviour, values and attitudes. Hence the school owes the physically handicapped (and the intellectually disabled—see chapter 18) a debt of gratitude.

Socially Disabled

Schools tend to be designed for middle-class families who have the power to decide the type of school achievement by which society will be rewarded. Any kind of programme which purports to recognise educational equality of opportunity must adopt 'the radical concept . . . [that] eventually a proportionate share of children from sub-ordinated social groups must attain 'success' in numbers commensurate with their proportions in the population'. (Marjoribanks, 1980, p.13) Disparities in the Australian scene are apparent in Marjoribanks' profiles of instrumental factors for the two groups.

Figure 13.



Marjoribanks, 1980

A programme was set up in 1977, after some trials in 1976, for a group of year 10 students who had strong anti-school feelings. These were the socially handicapped. The programme was not conducted in an annexe. It was *not* housed in a building 'down the back of the school'. It was in the midst of the school because the geographic position meant that the students would rub shoulders with other students and be encouraged to put their new found quality and confidence to the test. After we had investigated many annexes around Australia, we were convinced that the annexe model was not the answer to our problem. Annexes separated students from the rest of the school, made re-entry to the main school body unlikely, and re-inforced any negative views about learning.

While the students had their own study programme for about half of the time, they were also expected to take three subjects along with the rest of the school. It was assumed that the disruptive students were reasonably intelligent, and persons with character—sufficiently strong to reject a system and let their feelings be known. We accepted the task of helping them to reduce their anti-social feelings and of providing them with whatever skills they needed to enter upon normal studies. When they returned from their classes away from their area, their teachers were available to give them help which enabled them to go to the next lesson assured that they would be in good standing. Their course was integrated as a genuine school alternative, open to any student who might apply.

The programme was not an easy going affair. Work was expected and achieved. The emphasis was upon student participation in projects from which the teacher extracted a variety of immediately useful things to learn. They also learned, through their experiences, something of their own mental power, the value of teamwork, responsibility, reliability and persistence. While a second year was an option, we discovered that the first year was more successful than the second, and that the two groups did not mix well.

The project also helped teachers who were not directly involved in the programme understand socially disadvantaged students and appreciate the study handicaps which they suffer. Positioned as it was in the midst of the school, the teachers could not help observing something of what was occurring and be encouraged to introduce more activity into their own classrooms.

By 1979 it had run its course. Alternative methods and better relationships between students and teachers had reduced, almost to vanishing point, the number of students who strongly rejected school and showed it by persistently disrupting their classes. The evolution of the learning centres, the industrial mode of instruction and part-time study (see later in this chapter), were other measures which enabled potentially disruptive youngsters to fit in.

While we were clear that we should not support an annexe within the school, over my ten year period, Marion probably averaged about one such person each year who was so anti-social that support was needed beyond the school boundaries. This came in the form of a district annexe which, though well staffed proved equally unsuccessful with most of the students we referred to it (they sent them back after a few weeks). It seems that schools are quite unable to cater for a tiny minority whose presence is tremendously costly to other students.

Study-Work Programme

In 1979 the Commonwealth Government developed a scheme that they believed would relieve the traumas of unemployment. They were concerned that 'idle hands' would create evil in the community. The political messages were two-fold:

- unemployment would be short lived
- young people were unemployed because they lacked saleable skills, and were especially deficient in their 'basics'.

Both claims were questionable, even so early in the downturn—unemployment was arising from structural, as well as economic sources (the post-industrial technological age was upon us) and it could easily be shown that the 'basics' were better, not worse than twenty years earlier—but 'as we think, so we are' and people were ready to embrace the 'message'. As I saw it, a part of my job was to adjust our educative processes so that the students felt that the school was helping them in the areas they believed they were getting a poor deal.

The government scheme suggested that young people should volunteer for charitable work to gain skills and fill vacant time. $6 per week was offered for travel expenses in addition to the dole payment. There was merit in the scheme. The activity would occupy the youngsters' time, give structure and discipline to their days, bring them into contact with others, and perchance they would gain a few new skills. But the government was asking young people to commit themselves in a way that few adults would accept. At that time the phrase 'dole bludger' was prevalent, and many people including the parents of some unemployed young people, subscribed to the belief. The scheme did little for a young adult's dignity and self-image.

Numbers of 15 - 23 year olds who were keen to work, were having their applications for work rejected repeatedly. Some had faced more than fifty interviews without success. Their self-esteem was down and they were down, so that it was essential for somebody to do what was necessary to pick them up and give them new opportunities. Otherwise the prospects they had of getting a permanent job were declining as they continued to lose confidence in themselves.

Could the school help these young people to regain their dignity? I invented the study-work programme. We believed that we could help the young people by:

- improving their self-esteem and their attitude about their prospects in the work place
- giving them work experience
- improving their study qualifications
- paying them in excess of unemployment benefits.

The programme was basically an alternative mode for educating senior students. It was an industrial mode because the course was structured within a 35 hour week and the cultural environment of the work-place. The students concerned had decided already that they had gone as far as they wished with general education. In this programme they worked in a genuine job situation and were released to attend classes in two subjects of their choice. In addition, the students were paid each week for 15 hours of productive work, enough for them to have earned in excess of unemployment benefits.

We insisted that the young people attended classes and fulfilled the industrial behaviour code for their particular job area e.g. a well groomed-person was needed behind the reception desk, smoking allowed only during breaks! and so on. The staff was attracted to the scheme and allowed the common room to be used by these 'employees' who were making a considerable contribution to the school—there was plenty in the scheme for the teachers! And some costs!

The students were placed under the direct control of a manager who supervised the work component, and a director of studies (a teacher with industrial experience) gave advice and organised the study aspect of the programme.

After an interview, the students might be selected to work in one of the following list of work-type 'courses': canteen cookery, furniture repairs, groundsman, landscape gardening, book-mending, industrial sewing, recreation centre maintenance, library aide, office skills, odd-job skills, laboratory maintenance.

To provide the wages for the youngsters and pay the manager, some of the young people had to be engaged in profitable work. A survey of the school showed that we could find work for up to twenty-five young people at any one time, but it would be necessary for half of any number to be engaged in profitable work (a kind of microcosm of society). I hit upon the idea of restoring salvaged school furniture as the basic income earner. The Education Department was supportive and Dr Mayfield, then Director of School Facilities, helped me negotiate with the Public Buildings Department, who normally avoided furniture repair, because their efforts had been uneconomic. However, cash to buy new furniture for schools was already short, and the prospect of getting three desks for the price of two had its appeal. A hesitant approval was given largely because our projected work load appeared to be insignificant, but also because the officers had some sympathy for our cause, although they did not really believe that it would succeed. We sought the support of the Trades and Labour Council (unions) and after they had made their investigations, we found ourselves free to begin.

The school invested about six thousand dollars in the project, and I took the full responsibility for the risks that were unquestionably present. In simple terms, the sale of one desk would provide an hour's wages for one person in the factory, and one person in, say, the library or office, covering the cost of materials and a share of the manager's salary.

The Education Department helped us by providing some basic tools, (perhaps $2000 worth), and by giving us access to furniture that would otherwise have been discarded. We bought an old baker's van for fifty dollars from a sympathetic distributor—it served us very well for more than two years.

A large shed, bought a few years earlier to house a small bus and some equipment, was adapted by the first students as a 'factory'. Next we had to survive a quality inspection which was carried out by an Education Department officer. After about two years of operation, Adelaide Rotary Club presented us with equipment and materials to extend the buildings. Other groups made donations which helped us improve our supply of tools.

To get orders we had to win the co-operation of the regional officers of the Education Department. Some were helpful, but the amounts of work promised were not always honoured, and few thought it was necessary to inform us about any changes they made to their furniture supply plans. To expand our work prospects we also became involved in landscaping and other minor tasks. Since the Education Department funds became exhausted in June (or earlier) and new allocations were not made before September, we had to act with a good deal of faith to make ends meet.

But we survived, and youngsters previously depressed, often found work so quickly that a problem resulted from the brevity of the time they were in the programme. The scheme was instrumental in gaining employment for some fifty youngsters in its first year. The success rate was unexpectedly high. A few of the youngsters chose to go back to full time study after a few weeks in the scheme, and only one had to be dismissed. None of the rest failed to get a job in less than the full year for which they were enrolled.

At the heart of the success of the scheme (course) was the friendly supportive counsel given by the manager, bursar, and assistant bursar. These people worked in close association with the students and the teachers. The latter treated the students appreciatively and courteously in the areas where they worked and made them welcome in their classes at any stage of a year, even knowing that they might leave to go to a job after a period of maybe only three weeks. More recently, with unemployment higher and more accepted by the community, the turn over rate has slowed down, the average stay has lengthened, but the processes of rehabilitation continue.

A major outcome is the certain knowledge that the industrial mode of educating some senior students is valid. In this way, numbers of young people (many had no previous experience in our school, and they came from all of the education systems) were given a second chance, which they accepted. We have established that the pettiness of the criteria many employers use for selection, often based on middle-class 'virtues' and a phoney culture perpetrated by some of the independent schools, leads them to miss some of the best prospects who will ever come before them. This comment is especially applicable to the children of the poor. We can only conclude that the social arrogance of some bosses is a much more serious problem for our society than any lack of skills on the part of young people.

The programme had other good outcomes. The school as a whole benefited from their labours, and teachers could give better service because the study-work student was 'at work' in the school. Students in many schools around the State have a good chair or desk because the factory repaired a broken one. The State has been saved many thousands of dollars in unemployment payments, and in some cases the costs of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. These young people also helped the staff break from the established mores of secondary school status symbols and to appreciate that a post-compulsory student is generally a responsible person.

Compared with the great mass of unemployed, our totals were meagre. But as a corollary of the scheme, several other young people, who felt that their formal general education should be at an end, entered upon a contract to work in the school under the industrial mode. For these students, the study component was greater, but they were able 'to feel like workers with a job'. While supervision was sometimes difficult, there were many who avoided the dole and made an easier transition to a paid job than would otherwise have occurred.

As a result, several schools have included something of this latter experience for some of their students. Young adults are motivated by encouragement, success, and the chance to do something real and immediately worthwhile. Returned their dignity and self-esteem, they are saved from the extremes of anti-social behaviour which can arise out of frustration and anger. Although the 'dole bludger' phase is mostly behind us as more people have come to appreciate the ravages of structural unemployment, it is not always accepted that most youngsters want a job and are prepared to work harder than a substantial proportion of those adults who are employed. In these circumstances it is not surprising that some react angrily to deprecative or patronising comment from the favoured section of society. When will adult society give serious consideration to the impact of technology upon the total amount of work there is to do?

Oppressed Sections of our Community

The students involved in these four special programmes that have been described in this chapter are representative of numbers of oppressed students who emerge from our community. Youngsters from poor homes have to do a little better than their middle-class brothers and sisters to be seen as equal. Their school lives are more difficult,—the home resources are fewer, parents are generally less able to help, their houses are smaller so that quiet places for study are often lacking, and their parents often have very poor memories of school, or find it difficult to appreciate a student's needs. The economics of the family place pressures upon the students especially round the school leaving age when 'Mum', it seems, decides how she can make a sacrifice so that her child can continue at school. At Marion we tried to be sensitive. We erred at times by inflicting our middle-class values and by expecting middle-class resources to be available (e.g. withdrawal from a study trip was judged as lack of interest when the truth may have been that, at that time, even a small cost could not be managed). But we did often make special provision, and I believe that that is one factor in our superior retention and performance statistics.

Our curriculum allowed bright students, non-academics, those interested in the performing arts, in art, or whatever, to fit in without discrimination. Girls had equal access, and equal encouragement to take up whatever they wanted to study (we could not be responsible for community values).

There were times when we were tempted to intrude into the patterns of students' lives away from the school. Constantly we had to remind ourselves that the school was an institution set up in the community as a place of learning. We should only enter the social arena sparingly, and then only to advance the learning of our students. In general it was best for us to respond to the social situation as we found it, and to try to establish a warm understanding relationship with the homes of our students.

* * *

A JOURNEY INTO FREEDOM

One night on a Malaysian island, and also a refugee camp, Cuong and his friends were sitting on the beach. It was too hot to sleep, so they went to the beach to enjoy the moonlight. Cuong looked toward the sea. It was calm and not too bright under the moonlight. Far away, a few points of red light of some Malaysian fishing boats were flickering. It was midnight so everyone was sleeping. The waves were quietly slapping the flat seashore.

Cuong laid down on the sand. He watched the half moon and the coconut trees. He liked the island at night, quiet and peaceful. Suddenly the voice of his friend broke the silent air. "Look! There is a small boat. Are people fishing at this time?" "No, I don't think so," another said and stood up, "I think this is a refugee boat."

Cuong woke up. He saw the boat was passing the island, moving slowly in the gentle breeze. And it seemed out of control with nobody on it. It was not too far from the seashore. Cuong and his friend yelled, 'Come here, this is Pulau-Bridong." But nobody answered them, so they ran down to the seashore, jumped into the water and swam quickly to the boat. When Cuong got into the boat it was too dark to see, so he called his friend to drag the boat to the seashore. Soon they went and got a torch. When the boat was lit up, the boys were amazed by the horrible sight of blood everywhere. The blood was dry, but they could identify it easily. There were bloodstains on the broken machines. Five people were unconscious looking like dead bodies. They were not like Vietnamese, Cuong thought, they looked like Africans with their black skin which had been burned by the equatorial sun.

Soon, some High Commissioner doctors came and some Malaysian police also presented after that. The camp leader and many people came and brought those five poor people to the sick bay.

An hour later one of the five men woke up. He told the High Commissioner that there were also about ten people on the other unexplored island near by. He told his story beginning with the day he had left Vietnam.

He left Vietnam from Camau, a small town in Southern Vietnam. The boat left peacefully with 32 people on it. On the third day they were pursued by a strange boat shaped like a Thai fishing boat, so it was not too big. They started to sail faster but the Thai boat caught them at last, since the Vietnamese boat was very heavy and could not move fast.

Some strange men got into the Vietnamese boat and started to rob the people. They took everything: gold, watches and clothes. They couldn't find much gold and they became angry. They beat the engine and one of the pirates was trying to take out the gold-filled teeth of a Vietnamese man. The other was searching everybody on the boat. Later they dragged every girl and woman over to their boat, and sailed away after they threw everything even food and water of the Vietnamese overboard.

The poor boat was drifting and drifting with twenty people. Children were crying because of hunger and missing their mother or sisters. Some men were killed because they fought with the pirates when they caught their wife or daughter. So they died and left their children alive on the boat—scared and hungry. The captain did not know what direction to sail in, because they had lost everything, even their map.

Two days later some children had died and some were sick. Luckily, they met a trading boat and were given food and water, but the sailors said that they could not save the people, because their government did not allow refugees to settle in their country. If they saved those people they would have to let them settle in their country.

The trading boat decided to drag the small boat and a day later they got near the territorial waters of Malaysia. The sailors said goodbye and left. One morning, the boat landed on an unexplored island blown there by the winds. When the boat landed there were 15 people left on it. Ten people waded to the island and the others were too sick to move, so they stayed on the boat, caring nothing about the future. When the tide went up, the water pulled the boat away from the island and it drifted slowly. That was the night they were saved by Cuong and his friends.

The High Commissioner, with the Malaysian police and some Vietnamese people went to look for the other people who were on the unknown island. Around Pulau-Bridong there were many small islands, most of them are unexplored.

Many people were waiting for the High Commissioner's boat to leave and wished that the people would be found and saved. In the evening the boat came back. They had found the other ten people!

At last, the boat arrived with fifteen people, half had died because of their search for freedom. In spite of that, they had died for their idea.

Now, many Vietnamese people are fighting for their freedom. When I was living in Pulau-Bridong I met many people who had lost their reason and become insane because of the frightening days on the sea. One of my friends had a sister missing. Many children became orphaned. This is one kind of movement in which people can't be sure whether they will arrive safely or not.

by Ha Ngan Lam
Year 10

HOMESICK

Since my leaving my home
I like to go back, in dreams
All I really want.

. . . Lam Duc Hung

MOTHER

In your family
The loving of a mother
That every one needs.

. . . Lam Duc Hung

SAIGON

Saigon villages
Surrounded by open fields
Give thanks to the sun.

. . . Chi Le

LOVE FOREVER

Oh my darling:
You lie there on your death bed
Four candles flicker
Sleep, deep sleep forever.
You're the earth; all go back to earth
The black hearse, slowly, slowly takes you to the
depths of the earth
I take a handful of sand to accompany you off at last.

I hear the sand drop on your coffin
My heart feels like thunder
It's suffering very much. It's broken.
You lie there in the ground.
No bed, no blanket. You must be very cold.
I want to be with you everywhere.
Look after you, even in this endless sleep.

I sit by your grave and sing a song. It is the first
time and the last time
You're gone, and you didn't say goodbye
This is pain and there is no relief.
Now the spade covers you with sand
Like bricks building a wall between us.
The sound of the digging above you—
Is like the sound of the hammer hitting my heart.

Now you lie there in the grave completely covered as if
you are no use to anyone
The empty hearse returns slowly.
I sit here and touch your grave
I feel the cool air blow in my heart.
I love you in your loneliness under the earth.
My darling sleep, and have a gentle sleep.
I will be with you and I will touch your grave and
keep you warm.

(Translated from the Vietnamese by the author—

Lam Duc Hung

Finally recess comes and I drift into the yard. I munch into an apple while observing a basketball game some girls were playing. Soon a bunch of four girls approach. They stand around me making sarcastic comments. I try to close my ears and study the ground but the comments keep flying in and crushing against my skull. My eyes fill with tears. I can take it no longer so I just get up and run.

I run into one of the girls' toilets, slam the door behind me and burst into tears. I reason with myself. This is MY life and I have to accept it this way because it's the only way. I wipe the tears from my eyes and walk out to face the true world of cruelty and suffering, remembering . . . this is my life.

Robyn Gough
Year 10

SUCCESSES I HAVE HAD THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES AND HOW IT HELPS ME TO FACE THE FUTURE . . .

Since coming to Australia (Adelaide) to study I start to have doubts about the knowledge I have from my previous school. I've learned a lot of subjects and various range of topics but I never tend to have much interest in the political side. I know that conditions in some countries are not as good as either Malaysia or Australia but somehow I never care much about them.

But since studying here in this school and after having so much English lessons with Miss Polias, I think I've learned a lot. I start to take an interest in studying the political situation in different countries and so forth. And having the class involving with Amnesty International I just think I'm lucky to have such a great experience.

Besides that, I've also learned a great deal about myself with different nationalities. Especially through the International Festival we had in our school some time ago, I've learned that everyone can have lots of good friends if they are patient enough and active enough to participate in many of the school activities.

I think from what I have learnt, it makes me look beyond what I know. In some way, to be careful for some people, to think clearly and also to learn from mistakes. I think, and hope, that in the future I may be able to help others besides myself.

Pauline Jiew
Year 11

MY COUNTRY

I am a Vietnamese, Vietnam is my home
My country is small, poor, and torn by wars
My people work hard night and day
But their spirits are high
Their faces are lined with worry
For they do not know when their enemies might appear
Or what their future will be
To me, Vietnam is a sad but beautiful country
I am proud to be born in the land of my people
I'll never forget my only true home.

. . . Chi Le

LAST LEAF

It is autumn now
Leaves start falling down from tree
One leaf clings to life.

. . . Chi Le

LIFE

Leaves fall from treetops,
leaf by leaf when the winds blow,
Why do summers end?

. . . Lee Tran

HAPPY CHILDHOOD (Title of Gold)

Wish to be thirteen
with beautiful fairy life
and make flowers talk.

Wish to be fourteen
with the greatness of poet's soul
and write for people.

Wish to be fifteen
with cheerful face like full moon
and light the dark world.

Wish to be sixteen
with very clear thinking
and loved by people.

Wish to be a girl
with a strong title of gold
and become a woman.

. . . Chi Le

CHILDHOOD

Inside a classroom,
thoughts always pass through windows,
When will lesson end?

. . . Lee Tran

WAR

Time will come again,
There will be another war,
How can we stop it?

. . . Lee Tran

MOTHER

Mother, oh, mother,
You have given me cradle,
You have given me childhood,
You have given me sunshine,
You have given me spring.
Mother, can you hear when I cry for you always?
Do you know how I miss you?
How I always dreamed of you
Did you moan when I left you?
Mother I am very grateful to have grown day by day
in your bosom.
Under your brilliant teardrops and bloom year
after year.
From the time we parted, I can only remember
one word: Mother!

. . . Lee Tran

QUESTIONNAIRE **responses from "Let The Feelings Speak"**

I have come to appreciate the love and kindness of other people. When there were bushfires many people gave money to the appeal. Old people gave their pensions, schools raised funds, and ordinary people gave. We live in a kind and generous country which I am proud of.

I'd like to get a horse and live a nice life without fighting and giving my children a bad life.

My parents and grandparents experienced the war in Europe (Latvia). Adelaide is my home and I think of it as the only place I will ever live.

Who cares about colour and creed? It's what's on the inside; personality and character.

I feel the white race is too greedy and I praise other races because they have guts.

I'd really prefer to live in Greece. Adelaide is all right sometimes.

I like people who are honest and you can trust. I don't like those who think they are great and know everything.

Q. *Often we look back longingly to a time that seems important. Is there such a time for you?*

A. *Yes, when my Nanna died, because she seemed so important to me.*

I'm Anglo-Australian and originally my ancestors came from Scotland, and I've also got dabs of Irish, French, Cornish and German in me, and I'm proud of it! I respect other groups — they are really no different. I detest apartheid policies.

I don't care about colours (other races)—it is the personality and how nice they are to you and other people.

I'm Australian and I'm proud of it. It doesn't worry me what nation people come from and it doesn't concern me that they come to our country. In a way it's flattering that they pick Australia.

I feel every group in society should have equal rights. However, I do not mean that a group of Hungarians should come over from Hungary and demand equal rights without accepting the country's traditions and laws.

Life is here for us to take
Your dreams and ambition are within reach
Want them, seek them
Charge ahead, it's yours
remember you only live once
make it now; right now.

Adelaide means to me—Home, because that is where I grew up, and that's where I am getting married.

"No memories of the past are really important to our family."

I was born in Poland, in the city of Wroctaw, which is one of the largest cities in Poland. The government then was very rough with the people. Adelaide means shelter to me. Sometimes I miss my old friends in Poland.

Kindness is important, because it's what other people need.

My hopes and dreams are that I get good marks at school and hopefully will be able to get a job as a nurse at the Children's Hospital. My dreams are also that the job situation gets a lot better and that Adelaide—Australia in fact, can be a much happier place.

Australians are racialist against all other nations, but what they don't accept is that Australia was first started from other nations.

Dennis Chung

I AM BLACK

Some people look at me funny
some call me names,
Is it all because
I'm black?

I want to join in on sports,
But kids won't let me.
Is it all because
I'm black?

My parents go for jobs,
But they never get one.
Is it all because
They're black?

My parents collect unemployment,
They're called 'bludgers',
They can't help it
If they can't get a job.

All we want
Is a fair chance
To live.

Carsten Gabrisch
Year 10

I COME FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY

I come from a land of poverty and disease,
Where people and animals live as one,
In old mud huts and a bed of straw.
The sun blazes down upon a little native village,
The banging of ox and wagon can be heard down the road.

The morning sun rises and the harvesting begins,
The villagers amble to their lifeline;
Rice fields deep with cool water the only relief we get,
The rice is not good this year; the gods have not blessed our crop.
Why is the soil so cruel?
This is my home.

Little children play near their huts
Naive about the shameful world they're to grow up in.
Starving children at the garbage bins,
Their families are too poor to feed them.
Still they play without fear of life,
This is my home.

I have heard of white people's land,
Where people eat off plates, using knives and forks.
They buy nice clothes and moving wagons without oxen.
But why go there? I wouldn't fit in.
They have their lives and don't want our worries.
Tho' that one day might be my home.

Simone Oschmanns
Year 10

I AM A NOBODY

The school bell rings and the students slowly stand and swing their bags over their shoulders. They half-heartedly wait for each other then drag their feet all the way to the classroom door.

I stare at them in a short rage of disgust. They are lucky; they have friends. They would never dare invite me, with my bright red curly hair and freckles, to join their group. How would they feel if they were born looking like me? I feel I must have been created so that good-looking people would have something to feel good about.

I stand up and wander to my class. The only good thing I can find about having no friends is that you get good grades. I plonk my overweight body down at the nearest desk and everyone suddenly moves away. I ignore them, but I can't help hearing the nasty giggles behind me.

20

DISCIPLINE
and the Alienated, Disturbed or Disruptive Child

> That society is sick no one can deny; that society does not want to lose its sickness is also undeniable. It fights every humane effort to better itself. In a way, our task as teachers is to fight against a mass psychology, a sheep psychology where every arrival has the same coating and the same ba ba . . . barring the black sheep, the challengers . . . Our sheep pupils are clad in their nice uniforms . . . [for] many a bored pupil, symbolically fitting.
>
> Education should produce children who are at once individuals and community persons. (Neill, 1974, p.10)

A bit too cynical perhaps, some might say unfair to society and to schools, yet it comes close to the 'discipline' problems that face many schools, and I suspect, much of society.

The school I have in mind is orderly and its students have learned to consider the reasonable needs of others. But there is no blind adherence to a long list of rules because there is no such list. Instead, there is insistence, backed by the real possibility that any behaviour which causes embarrassment to the reasonable activity of another, will bring a reprimand and punishment if the situation demands it. No action of a student is allowed to violate sensible standards of safety or incur danger to property. The behaviour of any one student must not interfere with the simple rights of others to get on with 'learning' and 'being taught'.

These pages contain many references to youngsters who, in some way, have been rebels at school. Most of those who are unhappy with school are just apathetic—the ones about whom teachers like to say 'could do better' in their reports—but there are a few who show their distaste in much more aggressive ways. I came to admire these forceful quarrelsome characters, for they had the spunk to show their displeasure and I came to be grateful to them for the insights they gave me about school. These youngsters dare to be different. They are the black sheep who challenge what the school is doing—its injustices and its double standards, as they affect teacher and student, the bright and not-so-bright, the well dressed and not-so-well dressed, the conservative and the off-beat and so on.

This book is about a response to youngsters (the majority) who are either apathetic or rebellious about school. We set out to find ways to reduce the number of alienated students in the school, not by removing them but by trying to eliminate the causes of their dislike so that they would want to stay on at school. Some of our critics tried to put our work aside by accusing us of merely chasing numbers but what occurred is not so easily dismissed.

The problem in western schools is immense. I put 'disinclination' at a level approaching 70% of all students. Of these perhaps 10% are deliberately disruptive, and a smaller number are so deeply disturbed by their experiences away from school, that they need a level of help which is beyond the capacity of the school.

My approach is simple. The best way to deal with disinclined and disruptive children, is to create the conditions in which they are neither disinclined nor disruptive, without sacrificing any of the orderly conduct or moral standards of behaviour that characterise good schools.

> It would seem that the amount of destructiveness to be found in individuals is proportionate to the amount to which expansiveness of life is curtailed. By this we do not refer to individual frustrations of this or that instinctive desire, but to the thwarting of the whole of life, the blockage of spontaneity of the growth and expression of man's sensuous, emotional, and intellectual capacities. Life has an inner dynamism of its own; it tends to grow, to be expressed, to be lived . . . the drive for life and the drive for destruction are not mutually independent factors but are in reversed interdependence . . . Destructiveness (disruption in the school environment—my addition) is the outcome of unlived life. (Fromm cited by Powell, 1976, p.17)

The fact that there are influences which operate from outside the school, and over which teachers have little control, does not justify the tendency of so many teachers to reject students who do not fit their own values and expectations. Though this attitude has been cultivated by the deliberate policy of some schools (these schools it seems, base their discipline upon a promise to expel those who do not conform), I am convinced that, by imposing their prejudices upon students, the task has been made much harder, not easier, for the majority of teachers.

It has alienated parents and the public, as well as students. Out of experience, I believe that we can win most young people, and in doing so, reap immense rewards for teachers and for society at large. This fact alone is sufficient for schools and teachers to make the adjustments that are needed to embrace the principles and practices outlined in this book.

Over the last decade or so, secondary schools throughout the western world have tried the teacher-comfortable idea of talking about having schools with different philosophies and aims. It was a strategy which never had any prospect of success, because at best the government school had little control over its clientele. To my mind that is a good thing. However it does insist that every school will have a wide cross-section of students and, as more students stay on at school, that the student body will become even more diverse. Many children came to Marion deeply upset by their experiences elsewhere and we were able to set nearly all of them upon more productive paths. Their rejection of school had to do with failure, dissatisfaction with offerings or lack of access to them, or discomfort with the social culture of the school they came from.

They told us the same story that Marion students had told us back in 1974. The common element is loss of self-esteem and dignity.

There is an event recorded in the Bible which addresses the problem of a person's negative self-image. The story leads us towards a solution, and the kind of discipline which is helpful.

> There was a man named Zacchaeus; he was superintendent of taxes and very rich. He was eager to see what Jesus looked like; but, being a little man, he could not see him for the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed a sycamore-tree in order to see him, for he was to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said, 'Zacchaeus, be quick and come down; I must come and stay with you today'. He climbed down as fast as he could and welcomed him gladly. At this there was a general murmur of disapproval. 'He has gone in', they said, 'to be the guest of a sinner'. But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Here and now, sir, I give half my possessions to charity; and if I have cheated anyone, I am ready to repay him four times over'. Jesus said to him, 'Salvation has come to this house today!' (*The New English Bible*, Luke, 19: 2 - 10)

Zaccheus, who worked for the Roman overlords, was steeped in corruption. It is not hard to imagine that this little man had a very low self-image. Despised by his race, deceitful and devious, it is perhaps understandable that he was not allowed to join the others who were lining the route to get a close look at the local hero, Jesus, as he passed through Jericho. So he got up in a tree. He would be out of harm's way, and insignificant enough not to be recognised. But Jesus did see him, and what was more Jesus named him by his usual name, 'Zacchaeus'. Did Zaccheus curse at being recognised? Trapped, he agreed happily enough to Jesus' request to be his dinner guest. One cannot imagine that much conversation occurred on the way to his house, but the murmurings of disapproval and hatred ringing in his ears must have excited traumatic stirrings within Zacchaeus. As they approached his house he suddenly muttered, 'I'll give back all the money I have wrongly taken from people'. What happened inside the house, during the meal is not known, but Zacchaeus acted differently afterwards. Zacchaeus probably found a friend in somebody who thought he had the potential to be a better man, so he adopted the role of a good citizen who was convinced that he had a contribution to make to society.

Self-discipline

Students with high self-esteem are motivated to build an image of themselves. Hence discipline which is, at base, acceptance of standards, is linked to motivation.

Raven, in *Education Values and Society*, sees three factors which motivate a student toward success and a high sense of personal worth.

> Biggest failure is perhaps to accord recognition to the real diversity of talents and competencies, pupils might display, to the diversity of talents required in modern society, and to the role the school would display is fostering such competencies. More succinctly, the failure is to break out of thinking solely in terms of academic knowledge and a range of traditional school subjects: failure to add other important

> competencies and abilities such as initiative, fellowship, ability to notice problems . . . Failure to include these things means that many pupils will, in spite of their real qualities and values to society, continue to be told that they are failures . . . [preventing them] developing self-image.
>
> Enable people to feel that they have accomplished something worthwhile . . . something individual, . . . [something] they can be proud of . . . responsibility: a real self-selected task which enables the pupils to utilise and develop the talents they possess. (Raven, 1977, pp.29 - 30)

Motivation most certainly cannot be achieved in an atmosphere where academically successful students, who take a pre-determined set of subjects, are systematically approved and segregated from the others, who are not approved. When we do that, we break down a person's perception of his or her own worth, and create the conditions for reactions against school, against training and ultimately against socially acceptable behaviour.

At Marion, we set out to recognise and make opportunities for students to use a great diversity of talents, and to create the conditions which made them aware that they were growing in knowledge and wisdom. Hence at the root of active participation in school was the policy of 'equal esteem for all learning and all kinds of legitimate achievement' and a strong discipline which could become a self-disciplined valid base for self-motivation.

The trouble with the force-feed authoritative approach is that it is possible to get acceptable behaviour, but it does not achieve learning. Many (most) students find ways to keep out of trouble, but they are apathetic about learning—the easy way is to call them lazy. A smaller number rebel and no amount of 'disciplining' will overcome the revulsion these students feel towards school. Barred the use of the cane, schools try 'reasoning with the student', but it is a one way street along which the student has little chance to put his side of the matter. The ultimate outcome is that the student leaves school, or is put out by one of the smooth routines employed by many schools. Many in positions of authority appear to win the support of teachers through their ability to 'persuade' students (and parents) to remove their children from school. This is a tragic indictment of those schools, which claim to be presenting opportunities for students to increase their knowledge and skills, develop a love of learning and stimulate growth in their appreciation of the power and skills of thought.

Marion took another approach—we set out to encourage self-discipline and several elements of the programme were directed to that end:

- The school expected student performance to improve, and intellectual capacity to grow, and it made provision for students to be aware of their progress as well as responsible for it. The system of checks, and the work demands placed upon students, required their attendance, attention to assignments and their good behaviour. Levelling (chapter 7) ensured challenge and success, the reward system provided encouragement.
- The school tried to provide a supportive, caring, attractive, happy environment (chapter 8).

- Celebration (chapter 10) provided constant evidence that the institution was primarily concerned with learning, which had its routine demands, but could be enjoyable and worthwhile.
- Training was offered, and experience in making real choices about the subjects they would study. Counsellors gave information and advice, but students were encouraged to make their own decisions and the school abided by those decisions. A decision might be to take any number of subjects and it might involve changes in direction along the way.

  There was room for everybody. The programme was wide enough for all of the students to identify their own interests and aspirations within it. We tolerated and benefited from those who were different and chose to be different (chapter 13).
- The methods used by the teachers anticipated the students' participation in active modes of learning (chapter 14).
- Trends toward less time in the classroom and more time in special study occasions in the field, in special programmes over longer than lesson periods, provided a build up of evidence that learning is a relevant inter-disciplinary form of inquiry, discovery and solution seeking.
- The learning resource centre (chapter 15) provided assistance when it was needed and a group of services which included resources and back-up.
- Arrangements for independent learning (chapter 16) gave students the freedom to own their study, and the resources to complete the assignments set for them. Training in the use of time, and the flexibility to fit in with their other plans, and their home patterns, led to decisions to which they could be committed. The extended schoolday made certain that there was even greater opportunity for students to meet teachers.

Each of these factors, in some way, describes the professional behaviour patterns of the teacher. The list is not one from which teachers select whatever appeals to them but an all embracing set of 'musts' from which there is no escape. The teacher's personality and preferred style are not in question unless they lead the teacher into conflict with any of these matters. Unless self-discipline is being encouraged a teacher's work must be less effective than it has a potential to be. Nowhere is firmness, scholarship, high expectation or teaching skill challenged except in so far as these qualitiies are expressed in an environment which makes learning an attractive prospect for students.

REALITY

The original meaning of the word discipline concerned learning, and being taught what was expected of a person. It refers to behaviour, moral values, work and other components of human endeavour.

There are people who think that the troubles of our world can be solved by regimentation of young people's lives. There is no doubt that there are things which *must* be done but, in the end, the motivation to learn and to act must come from *within.* The youngsters must be conditioned to respond, co-operate, even conform because it is in their interest, and the interests of others, for them to act in the ways required. We call that good manners and thoughtful behaviour, and few students are unwilling to learn what is expected, and how it can be achieved. But like the Good Samaritan's reactions, they must come to respond to situations, not based upon fear and mindless conformity, but based upon an element of consideration and concern for other people. It may also be for their own peace of mind. Unquestioning response to authority is relatively easy to attain—in fact, an authoritarian teacher can almost mindlessly regiment a class or brutally force them into blind obedience. But self-motivation, as it arises out of self-discipline, can only be achieved through patience and sensitivity and by leaving room for mistakes to be made and corrected.

For survival, school discipline must have elements of control, but the school should never allow itself to be persuaded that controls signify good discipline. In contrast to mindless obedience under a teacher savouring his position of power, a balance between control and opportunities for self-disciplined activity, though harder to establish, is, in the end, far better for all parties. It is rather like members of an orchestra who obey because the music will be more harmonious. The players are as keen as the conductor for the performance to go well. There is an assumption about the worthiness of the cause in this relationship. Teachers who do worthwhile things have little need to assert the power of their position.

Assistance for Teachers

Reality tells us that what we have been describing is the only path that a school can follow to create a disciplined learning environment. But it is also realistic to accept that, through unseemly behaviour, some youngsters will always embarrass some teachers. For our safety and survival in the high density of our school communities, there must be some taboos. Some adolescents will indulge in experiments to test the consequences of what they know is unacceptable behaviour. Others come to school from disturbed circumstances, and there will be days when they will 'blow up' in spite of even the most idyllic conditions at school or even because they have entered a caring community from an unloving home. Life is neither easy nor peacefully straightforward for many students, and the number in the category of 'unsettled' is increasing.

Marion had four arrangements to help the teacher and the student cope with these 'exceptional' situations.

THE FOCUS ROOM

This was a development of an idea I observed at Balga High School in Western Australia. It was strongly supported at Marion because the drastic changes of the period 1972 - 75 had produced a group of youngsters who were in serious conflict with most of the teachers and the school. Within the busy area of the school a room was chosen and given four functions. It became:

- an information centre
- a drop-in activity area at break times
- a place for sick students to rest and find help
- a work-place for students who had been in conflict with a teacher who judged that it would be best to remove the child from the class for a time.

The role of convenor was undertaken by a teacher who was given time to organise the centre and supervise its activities at break-times. Most teachers volunteered to give up a lesson of their unscheduled time to staff the centre.

Only the last of the four functions is directly related to our present concerns, although the others all contributed to a healthier atmosphere. When a student was taken to the centre by a teacher, the duty teacher took over. The child was settled to work and then the child was encouraged to talk about the background of the problem. For example, when a teacher asked the students to present their homework exercises, a boy who had not done the work, rudely told the teacher 'to mind her own business' and more. A few minutes later, in the focus room the youngster broke down as he described the scene in his home the night before. He had spoken as he had done because he did not want the class to hear of his troubles. He quickly settled down in the focus room, agreed to apologise, got the work done and followed on with the work for the day. The duty teacher passed on the information to the subject teacher who readily accepted the boy's apology and a new start was happily agreed to. A sympathetic ear was usually all that was needed but sometimes other action was taken. A logbook gave details of any previous visits to the room and this background information was available to the duty teacher. When a serious matter was exposed (perhaps by a series of such visits), the matter was referred to the appropriate person in the school (a teacher, a school counsellor, the principal or a deputy principal, an appropriate senior) or some person outside the school. While the basic aim was to settle the child back in class, the situation often became a learning experience for the teacher.

- The teacher may neither have heard, nor been able to listen in the classroom situation, to the child's explanation.
- Information about the background and problems of the children away from school could be passed on to their teachers.
- The duty teacher could advise the teacher about approaches which would not result in a loss of face, but would bring co-operation from the class as a whole, and the specific youngster in particular, without confrontation or conflict.
- The duty teacher might realise that the youngster had provoked the situation, and now was pleased to have the matter resolved.

As the years passed, the number of students who found themselves in confrontation-situations decreased to a point where the focus room could be abandoned. There were three reasons for this:

- There was less frustration about coping with classwork.
- The methods teachers used were more appropriate.
- The relationships which built up in a homestead were improved to a point where confrontation was unlikely (even on days of special stress).

On those rare occasions when a blow-up did occur, the teacher would either set up a 'focus room' situation, with a teacher in the homestead, or *take* (go with) the child to the principal or deputy principal *at the time*. The situation was often settled on the way to the principal's office, and the pair returned to the classroom amicably without troubling anybody else. No teacher was allowed to simply send a child out of the room. We believed that course of action encouraged experiments in misconduct and did not help the teacher establish the best possible environment.

OFFERING A THIRD OPTION

The second strategy followed from the first. Students who were in years 10 - 12 had already entered young adulthood in their dealings away from school. (They were also beyond the age of compulsion though that is not important in this instance.) We believed that no teacher should have to bear consistently wilful disruptive behaviour from any students. Hence we offered these alternatives. The students could:

- continue in the class as a co-operative productive member
- change to another subject—we would assist in the transfer—or
- take no subject at that time.

The key is in the last option. Many disruptive students make it a kind of game, knowing that they are locked into a class of which they do not wish to be a part. In our experience, few chose to leave a class altogether, but whatever their decision, they had made it, and few failed to honour it. Those who opted out, soon learned to use the time, often establishing better standing in their other classes. In effect, the student decided to be a part-time student, a judgement which was often valid, in view of the student's background and other commitments.

It is very unlikely that the most frightening deputy or anybody else will be effective from a distance. For example, as a matter of pride one teacher would not agree to release a failing disruptive youngster from his class. The principal's intervention was not popular but the boy's behaviour and progress, after the situation was relieved, more than justified 'the soft' approach. Yet was it soft, for the student 'came into line'?

Sometimes a teacher feels that only severe punishment will compensate for the frustration the child has caused. Maybe a principal, deputy principal or some other person in a position of authority will yield to this pressure and deal out some form of punishment. It seldom works. Harsher penalties are imposed and more traumatic confrontations result, both in the class and in the deputy's office. In desperation, almost sadistic pleasure may develop on both sides. In the end the teacher and deputy lose face and the student loses his school career.

THE ECOLOGICAL METHOD

There will always be a small number of students, particularly, but not exclusively, younger students, who prefer 'teacher-baiting' to any other kind of classroom activity. It is their rebellion or protest against what they find is a frustrating environment. While the school must try to eliminate or reduce the impact of the sources of annoyance, the current disruption to the work of the class must not be ignored. But when normal correction does not seem to bring immediate or lasting results, the teacher tends to 'nag' and to feel frustrated by students who frequently disrupt the class. These students may be helped by an approach which establishes with them, that a classroom environment which has orderly co-operative conduct on the part of students, under the reasonable authority of the teachers, is to be preferred to other circumstances that the school could legitimately impose. In a number of difficult cases, the procedure has been very effective much to the relief of the teachers. Other students, knowing about the 'braver' students' experiences, have been less likely to be disruptive. After a short time, the youngsters who were prepared to try to call the teacher's bluff at first, often asked to return to the class where they discovered that there were rewards to be had through complying with the reasonable routines of the classroom. Through this process new relationships were established between students and their teacher.

The procedure we used was based upon what Seymour Sarason called the ecological method in *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, and parts are quoted here to assist the reader

> The most commonly recommended technique for suppressing defiant behavior is that of excluding the disobedient child from the classroom . . . The success of exclusion depends on the preparation given . . .
>
> When a child is received in another room, he is to be given a seat at the back and excluded from any form of participation or interaction in the class . . .
>
> Older children refusing to leave their rooms are to be informed that unless they do so their parents will be phoned immediately . . .
>
> So far the exclusion plan has the ingredients of an effective technique for suppressing defiant outburst: it immediately terminates the disobedient behaviour without introducing complications in either the receiving or excluding classrooms. Its unpleasant quality for the child renders it an effective influence technique in shaping more compliant subsequent behaviour. The most significant source of power adhering to the plan, however, is probably not its unpleasantness per se but its decisive ability to force on the consciousness of the child the limits beyond which he may no longer go . . .
>
> It also gives the teacher a measure of authority he/she had been lacking in verbal injunctions. If the plan is to maximize the child's chances of remembering and following classroom rules, it must be introduced to the whole class not as an angry punitive retaliation by a distraught teacher, but as a way of helping children to remember to follow rules that allow them to enjoy learning. It should be explained to the children repeatedly that a child will be excluded not because he is unwanted or disliked but because he needs the brief opportunity in another classroom to reflect on the rules he has been disobeying. By introducing the procedure to the entire class in a group discussion it does not appear as though the defiant child is being singled out . . .
>
> In their actual implementation of the plan, teachers are cautioned against excluding children when they are furious with them, waiting instead until they have regained their composure. At that point the child is to be given one private, unembarrassing warning that clearly states that if a specific behavior does not cease he will be excluded . . .
>
> In no case is a child excluded unless he has had one and only one private warning from the teacher to remind him clearly of the rule he is breaking and of impending

> exclusion if he does not stop disrupting the class. Contained in such private warnings must be the teacher's attempt to explain to the child how he is disrupting the class . . . (Sarason, 1971, pp.134 - 141)

Some readers may anticipate considerable risk in following this procedure. This was not our experience. But any chance of trouble was reduced by the on-going attempt we were making to keep the rituals of the classroom in balance, and in constant tension with our knowledge of the kinds of problems students have in growing up in their world and, the ideas, interests, concepts of life and expectations that they bring to school with them. Out of the constant discussion and reflection which occurred, there was something of the excitement of authority which accompanied the way staff members were able to modify their behaviour patterns. The benefits of a marked reduction in the harmful, energy sapping, time-wasting conflict which followed numbers of amendments to rituals, was achieved without loss of standard and sometimes with unexpected comforts for the teachers.

SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL

Suspension from school for short periods is permitted, by law, in South Australia.

It has occasionally been useful because parents are inclined to take the school more seriously about the misbehaviour of their child than may come from other approaches. I always aimed to get the parent into the school with their child as quickly as possible. Usually the truth of the matter revealed itself quickly in the interview, and the parent would offer support. We would agree that the child could resume at school as soon as a satisfactory undertaking about the future was given. The opportunity to ask for re-entry was not available until the parent and the child had had a chance to discuss the matter thoroughly (usually next day). Few students needed to be suspended again. Those few who did, were, through the procedure, building up evidence which could become sufficient reason for the school to ask the parents to take the child away; I can recall less than a handful of such cases over a twenty-year period.

Experience showed us that the casual attitude exhibited by a minority of students not only prejudiced their chances of success but also seriously interfered with the freedom of other students who wanted to make proper use of all that the school offered. In such cases, I would ask such senior students to contract

- to work quietly and without interfering with other students during independent study time
- to attend to all general routine matters, assemblies, and other gatherings required by the school
- to observe the general rules of behaviour and courtesy in a manner acceptable to the school community
- to observe the rule concerning not leaving the school grounds, and
- to respond to a number of other matters which were relevant to the case (each requirement would be set down on paper).

To ensure that the students responsibilities were clear there was also a reference to some particular obligations upon the teachers to provide students with schedules setting out:

- which periods would be devoted to instruction
- *which periods were available for dependent study, i.e. periods when the teacher* would be available
- details of assignments and due dates
- other information of assistance to students.

There was also a brief statement of the penalties that might be incurred by a broken contract. Both the child and one of his parents were required to sign the document.

Some few students found the contract helped them become more self-disciplined. Formulating such contracts does not consume much time. Many asked for a daily check or report time. They liked to have, and clearly needed, somebody to care about them. Usually the process was affirming for the student and encouraging for the teacher. It was not unusual for the youngsters to bring along evidence of the good work they had done and to volunteer the challenges they were setting for themselves for the immediate future.

In the beginning, and as a strategy to lift their expectations, we required all senior students to make a contract. After three years it was no longer necessary to have all of the students enter into a formal agreement, but from time to time it proved a helpful way of getting a student 'moving'. Its secret for success was in the negotiation which showed students clearly that the school was on their side and above all else wanted them to have a pleasant, profitable time at school. Invariably other matters like the use of their time and their aspirations (which may have been either too high or too low) could be examined constructively.

Causes

It was valuable for us to seek out the causes of our troubles. There is a fable which may help. A school consisted of kangaroos, ducks, 'possums and emus. The curriculum included flying, running, swimming, climbing and jumping. Flying and swimming were the prestige subjects so that the ducks enjoyed highest status. The compulsory nature of the programme and rules of promotion which involved passes in at least four subjects created considerable problems for some students. Let us examine that school (with apologies to Dr. G. Reavis, Assistant Superintendent, Cincinnati School Board, whose general idea is being used), to see how the system can create breakdown in discipline. On the advice of their teachers the kangaroos spent long periods out of school trying to reach minimal standards at flying, but failure still threatened, and a general feeling of hopelessness began to dominate their feelings about school. Later, when they were able to pursue jumping, self-motivation grew and higher achievement was the result. The potential for disruptive behaviour had been replaced by self-discipline. It is certain that much of the antipathy students have for school, arises out of the continual experience of failure from which they see no escape.

A second source of breakdown is the school environment in which the teachers care about students succeeding academically (in the fable—making all animals into 'ducks') but fail to be concerned about them as whole human beings. No amount of pressure, urging or encouragement, will turn around the low self-image of those students who do not believe that they are able, and in truth may not have the mental capacity to respond successfully. The effect tends to be negative to the point where they may not seriously attempt many of the tasks which are within their reach.

But often the roots of misbehaviour have social bases. Robert McMahon, a Tasmanian school teacher from Launceston who had much to do with seriously anti-social, anti-school youngsters, commented to colleagues in an address to the Tasmanian High School Principals' Conference in 1980, as follows:

> I cannot pretend to account for the causes of social disturbance in detail. No-one could. But the context is understandable if one is prepared to see it in Ivan Illich's terms.
>
> 'I am poor', wrote Illich, 'when the use value of my feet is lost because I live in Los Angeles or work on the thirty-fourth floor of a skyscraper. I am poor when I must work to pay for a car to take me to work. You see, I am locked into a vicious circle of technological dependence. We are all poor when our cities destroy the worth of community and the dignity of the individual. There is a great concern at the moment over the passivity of the populace, the robopathic way in which we seek mindless diversion through watching television or listening to records. We are all poor when our technology restricts the capacity and the effectiveness of a wider range of people'. Illich calls it 'citizen impotence', the destruction of autonomous man.
>
> If, like Bommi Baumann, the West German urban guerrilla, he feels his impotence acutely, he will lash out and smash the objects that represent a threat to his sense of personal worth and human worth in general. In his stark biography Wie Alles Anfing (How It All Began), he says: 'Where you can see that cars are more important than places for children to play, my whole disgust towards these object relationships just went through me one day, and I started slashing tyres . . . You have to see that people can be driven so far that they can only free themselves by irrational aggressive actions.'
>
> W.B. Yeats captures the feeling in 'Under Ben Bulben':
> Know that when all words are said
> And a man is fighting mad,
> Something drops from eyes long blind,
> He completes his partial mind,
> For an instant stands at ease,
> Laughs aloud, his heart at peace.
>
> (McMahon, 1980)

It is a stark and frightening picture but my experience supports its claims. I would go further and suggest that there are some schools who lock youngsters into systems which leave them feeling just as helpless. I have also seen the moment of peace on the face of a youngster who has lashed out violently, only to break down afterwards when somebody showed him how to find freedom for his soul. This is not to blame schools for society's troubles—the school is equally a victim of the loss of autonomy which society brings upon communities as well as individuals. I remember well the release I have felt after lashing out at some bureaucrat who had used his position to render me powerless to act upon a matter which I felt was urgent.

For a time my soul recovered its freedom and its autonomy. And others have shared the same experience. But the school must take care lest it make victims of students (and parents) by the same means. Other individuals may seem more passive as they 'stew' inside, and learn to act as though they are nonchalant.

REBUILDING STUDENTS

It takes considerable patience, forbearance, perseverance and skill for a teacher to create the conditions which change attitudes and behaviour patterns on a permanent basis. The number of hurt students is large enough for teachers to seek out the qualities in themselves which will save students. For example, teachers might risk trust and reward, knowing that they like to feel trusted and respond favourably to tokens of encouragement and recognition whenever they come their way.

Teachers might feel constrained to try to modify parents' unreasonable demands. However, there is some cause for pessimism, if they take their hopes too far beyond their immediate sphere of influence. The number of students from unstable homes is increasing. Other students come from homes which do not share the values that society seems to require. A teacher who tries to motivate students by continually relating classroom outcomes to job prospects, as though learning has no other value, is hardly likely to be helpful in today's climate. Yet, in these matters, the school can help by recognising differences and changes in the society around the school, reflect them within its boundaries and where necessary, make the students more aware of their existence in our society. The conservative may see such recognition of differences and changes as evidence of falling standards, while the progressive elements in schools may want all the students to reflect new values. But basically the school remains an institution which promotes learning. If students react against their surroundings and the vibrations of the relationships about them, they will not learn so well. Happy children learn more and behave better.

But there will be a few students for whom the school still seems to offer little. Maybe their problems away from school are so horrific, that their young souls are too damaged to respond to our love, care and concern. Or, maybe, they feel we are the only ones who care for them enough to ease their frustrations by testing our toleration and patience. And so, sadly, they will be in our schools. Our approach was to just keep this little group as happy as possible. We arranged for them to do whatever they would do, even if it was little at first and the same all day. We tried to make it 'real' so that we could say a 'real thank you'. We were usually able to bring about a reduction in the anti-social anger which they felt.

The matter is often difficult to consider because emotions cloud the general issues. Yet a degree of detached objectivity should not be impossible for so great a reward.

When we do make an objective assessment we are forced to agree that many of the disciplinary problems that exist in all kinds of schools arise out of structures and power-plays set up in schools by school people. It is equally in the hands of the school to change them. It is true that society has taken away much of the school's authority to discipline students. Offering a third option, as described earlier in the chapter, gives the school a chance to improve the learning environment by reducing the incidence of confrontation with the small number of students who are persistently disruptive.

Of course there are some teachers who are 'bullies', 'academic snobs', 'lazy', or 'without standards'. A small minority seem to have very little aptitude in communication, organisation or management within their classrooms. The idea that the principal must always protect the teachers can be taken too far. In the end the needs of the students must be paramount and, for that reason, all teachers have a responsibility to continually seek to upgrade their skills and influence. The ultimate reward should be success (effective learning) with a 'tough' class.

Steeped as we are in the routines of the behavioural and organisational procedures of our schools, the totality of the changes may seem formidable. With this very emotion welling in me, I was admonished once with two phrases which have stuck, and re-presented themselves many times over the years. I was reminded that *'without creativity, it is difficult to survive'.* I was invited 'to put myself *at risk* doing new things and doing old things in new ways'. I found it rewarding personally to 'give myself permission to be creative', reminded that to give way to the pressure to 'conform, conform, conform' could lead to 'death of soul' and mental and spiritual 'paroxysm'.

My experience testifies that the responses of students have more than rewarded my attempts to follow that philosophy. Our world is full of possibilities which beg us—administrators, teachers, and students alike —to venture. Over a period of years, amazing and unexpected things can be achieved. But they will only be realized if we let go our disciplinary (controlling) grip, and chance a discipline which is at once strong and freeing.

21

ADDITIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES

The quality of a school's programme is lifted, even dependent upon, the effective participation of people who help teachers to perform their roles. There are three groups—paid ancillary staff, adult volunteers and students.

Ancillary Staff

Ancillary staff fall into two groups although some may serve in both categories:

- those who have purely administrative tasks
- those who work closely with students and contribute directly to their learning.

In 1974 all of the ancillary members of the Marion staff had been appointed with the expectation that they would be working as clerical assistants, receptionists or in the science laboratories. While much of their work was for teachers, they did not share in the classroom work and their contributions to the school were not immediately obvious. During that year we appointed two more people to undertake tasks with the second category clearly in mind. There was immediate tension. The latter tasks brought the person more immediately into the sphere of teachers and students. They tended to work and relax when and where the teachers were working or relaxing, whereas the first category people had their breaks away from the teaching staff.

As time went on, and the school population decreased, but became more complex, the need arose for more people in the second category. The formula by which the number of support people was allotted to the school was tied to enrolments, resulting in a continuing saga as the school student population varied from year to year. With change and the threat of change always around them, it is not surprising that there were upsets from time to time, yet the work load generally was accepted and handled with exceptional skill. Some had the skills to work with children but preferred their previous roles. Others lacked the skills and had no desire to acquire new ones. Of those who accepted the new challenges, most fulfilled the requirements well. Several new ventures were heavily dependent upon the ancillary (support) staff for their success because they are time and space fixed. They function as a sheet-anchor for the organisational framework of their section when teachers are otherwise occupied. For example, without a support person, the animal enclosure could not have been so useful.

The learning resource centre needed 'gate-keepers' who recorded the 'traffic' in and out and enabled students to study independently in the stable efficient atmosphere they helped to create. However, the intensity of the learning programme was such that inevitably the amount of clerical work was proportionately larger. To take only two examples, the field work entered into by teachers and their classes and the purchase of a bus to assist the programme made a large increase in the number of transactions for the treasurer. Both the open policy of the school and the increased presence of the community in the school contributed to an escalation in the number of people who required attention each day. While the high school council made appointments which were designed to offset these increases in work load they could not bring a return to the uncomplicated quiet of earlier days.

The teachers benefited too, not only because many chores were being done for them, but because, in a spirit of co-operation, they could use techniques which would not be possible otherwise.

Administrative help continues to be needed, and as an example the entrepreneurial role of the bursar has gained in importance. But the roles in which the support person works closely with students have become increasingly important.

Volunteerism

We noted earlier that education authorities in most countries are having to accept the reality that funding from taxation is receding in real terms (chapter 11). Yet the task of delivering better quality education to a wider clientele has never been harder pressed by the public. Paradoxically, the need which results from the widest diversity among the students, is most urgent where the resources both at home and at school are smallest. The staffing area which seems to be most expendable during any cut-back is that of the support personnel. One solution is to use volunteer helpers to offset the losses and build up services which can assist teachers to improve student learning.

From 1975 onwards, a service built up at Marion to a level where, during a year, over 200 volunteers gave at least 2 hours per week for a term.

The programme is justified on several grounds.

- Evidence that schools benefit when they have the active co-operation of parents has accumulated to a point where it is compelling. As understanding of the educational processes increases in the community, sympathy with the complexity of schools engenders a spirit of co-operation and more and more people become willing to help in whatever ways they can.
- Active involvement of volunteers in the life of schools enables teachers to cope more easily with the increasingly varied needs of students—students who must be prepared to enter a world where there is swift technological change, rapidly changing employment patterns and a difficult set of social, political and economic issues.
- Volunteers, including parents, have experience in a wide variety of areas, which enable them to be a significant resource. Many have, or are willing to learn, skills that make them a valued resource to students. Their presence extends the sense of community and adds to the richness of the school's programme.

- Volunteers can contribute in more fields than have involved them traditionally. The scope has also escalated because support staff, like teachers, are employed on a per-capita basis, so that the range of unfilled avenues for support increases whenever student numbers decrease.

The policy by which schools have become accessible to the community and welcome help, should be made apparent to parents of prospective students, when they first visit a school. At Marion students show most visitors around the school. They help people sense the atmosphere of the school and get an indication of the way students, teachers and volunteers work together.

From initial contact, parents discover that the common room is open to all and that parents are welcome at all times. This open approach helps when parents meet the teachers who work with their children. It is a short step for parents to understand that they are being encouraged to assist in the school as closely as possible to the children.

Parents, and other adult volunteers, are also a valuable economic resource. In labour, they can save the school thousands of dollars. Many examples could be cited. The maintenance work done by parents, the traditional and essential service they do in the school's canteen and cafeteria and fund-raising, all assist a variety of programmes. As governments decrease the real value of the money they allocate to schools, the economic role of the volunteers may become vital to the survival of some aspects of school programmes.

But it is the educational role which most justifies their presence. Teachers get valuable assistance from the close co-operation parents can provide. In a reading programme, for example, parent involvement makes it possible for more students to improve their literary competence. Likewise, parents who work in science classes come to understand that active laboratory work is more effective than passive observation of a teacher's demonstration. In the foreign language area, a mixed ability group of students, with volunteers to operate the language machines (audio-visual equipment), can work at the level their ability and progress permits. In each case and many more, the able can be extended and the slower triers are not irretrievably left behind. More of the teacher's time can be directed towards students who need professional help so that the quality of the learning situation can be improved markedly.

The educational value of parent-volunteer involvement is indirect as well as direct. The value of the pervasion of an atmosphere in which adults and adolescents converse in a joint learning enterprise is incalculable. It breaks down the 'generation gap' syndrome. Some parents who may be volunteer assistants in the library, for example, may study with students in other classes. This interaction emphasises the learning continuum. Students' perceptions of adults change: parents' perceptions of the adolescents becomes more realistic. The sense of unity, of all involved in a joint educational enterprise, is strengthened, and the sense of community deepens.

Because Marion was a community-oriented school, it sought to involve other members of the community as well. For example, adults who had been declared redundant in industries, through their involvement in voluntary work at the school, regained confidence at the same time as they made their expertise available for the school. Physically disabled people—victims of road accidents and persons with other reasons for their disabilities—have contributed to the life of the school community as regular gardeners, typists' assistants and general helpers.

Senior citizens were invited to explore the school and to accept our hospitality. One of our aims was to encourage participation. The more aged members of our community may wish to share their knowledge of the past: such co-operation is valuable in history. Others make use of the community contact centre, which had been built at the instigation of the school, within the school grounds, to provide an avenue for selling goods made by students, parents and members of the community.

Fears held by parents that students resent their presence in the classroom, and by teachers that parents are loth to help in secondary schools, both proved to be unfounded. In fact, the opposite is true. Students are glad to see parents who, in turn, in the context of an open school, become more aware of the realities of secondary education. Involvement in sports coaching and team supervision was a traditional role of parents. As physical education includes recreational and therapeutic elements, parents can also become involved in programmes like horse-riding or activities for intellectually disabled children.

In another setting, parents and others might help with interviews, puppetry, mathematical games, film study and confidence building, and with computing. Other helpers might provide mathematical or other stimuli for gifted students. The possibilities are endless. The programme will vary each year according to the needs and initiatives of teachers and to the skills and time commitments of the volunteers.

The teachers and those responsible for administering a school, including the high school council, must realise that the school would be a less vital and less viable learning institution, without the steady support of parent-volunteers.

Finally, when so many people are moving in and out of schools observing what is happening, they become informed sources about the nature of the life of schools. The open climate enables constructive dialogue to take place, on any issue, on a basis of shared understanding. For the volunteers, that understanding is as important as the work they undertake. To ensure the continuance of parent involvement, it is essential that volunteers, who might feel semi-isolated, recognise that they are part of a large band of volunteers whose work is valued. Often parents may work in a small group and be unaware of the collective value of their contribution to the life of the school. In 1979 Marion began to fete its parent-volunteers to make clear how grateful it was for their role. By talking and dining together, teachers and parents re-assert their belief in the value of a deliberate policy of volunteerism, and volunteers, who work in isolation from other helpers, become aware that they are part of a larger diverse group.

How then can parents and other helpers be attracted to join the volunteer work-force? There are several pre-requisites:

- Each group of teachers needs to recognise the value of this support programme, to identify and specify areas in which such a support programme is of value, to invite parents to learn about their homestead or faculty, to discuss their needs and, through conversation, to recognize the parents who may be able and willing to give the help required. The teachers should also arrange a time and place to go fully into the planned activity, describing its boundaries, before going ahead. In this way, with parents and teachers closely involved with the programme, understanding is ensured.

- Parents must be made to feel welcome. This was the reason for the close personal contact with a specific teacher, or team of teachers. Parents need to be able to see that their assistance is of direct value to the students.
- However, as such help is often undertaken away from other volunteers, it is important to provide opportunities for the supporting parents to meet and share their experiences.
- Teachers have to identify and list the ways volunteers might help them so that the possibilities can be put before those who inquire.

With these things accomplished, a general invitation can be offered to parents, seeking offers of help. Each volunteer can be put in contact with a teacher with an appropriate task. The teacher then gives a specific personal invitation to the person to help them—times, places and the details of the task can then be worked out.

A register of helpers and their talents should be kept so that none are forgotten and the school can be sure that all of the volunteers are invited to any special functions, receive letters of thanks, and can be contacted if some variation to the agreed arrangements occurs. Appreciation of the role of volunteer should be a regular part of written communications. New helpers may also be solicited to meet a short list of specific needs.

Students—Inside Work Experience

There are many opportunities for senior students to carry out tasks in the school environment which are at once helpful to the teachers, to other students and to the individuals who offer. Students can be allowed, at a social level somewhere between the status of teacher and senior student, to gain skills, knowledge and confidence, and to gather experience in responsible leadership. Rather than perform the traditional routine tasks carried out by monitors, students can work for the school in ways that are meaningful to them. (At Marion, the students who exhibited a high level of productivity, quality, reliability, willingness and so on, were given a certificate which proved useful at job interviews.)

The collective value of the work that only 40 students might do, each offering 3 hours each week, is considerable, especially when it is spread across a number of disciplines.

Concluding Remarks

When one focuses upon students, and within each of the three categories, there are a multitude of ways by which people can support student learning without trespassing upon the 'sacred' preserves of teachers.

Those teachers who capture this vision soon discover that in return for a small effort given to planning and training, they can receive immense assistance with their tasks as teachers.

22

ORGANISATION OF STUDENT AND STAFF TIME

To achieve the best outcome for all of the youngsters on its roll, is a fundamental, but lofty aim, for any school.

The themes of this book are strongly student-centred. While the chapter about teacher development examines ways of helping teachers and making them comfortable members of the school, nothing must distract us from the central thrust towards making the teachers better able to help students learn. Any social considerations which relate to any part of the extended school community must have a similar end in mind. I believe that almost every adolescent who leaves secondary school early, has been deprived because the opportunity to learn has been curtailed. While the school is not the only influence upon the child and not the only avenue for learning, even the critics of schools are finding that it is still the best institution we have for its purpose. It is the secondary school's unique and serious responsibility to provide a suitable learning environment for every child for five or six years.

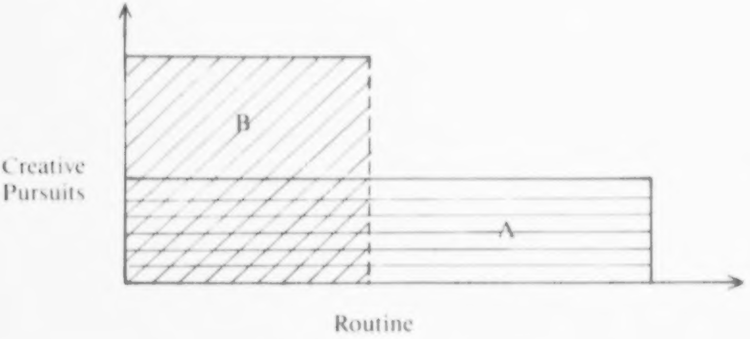
The forms of organisation, which schools adopt, can help or hinder student learning. They may become teacher-centred with disastrous results. School structures may be outmoded and restrictive, or arranged to favour one section of the enrolment—the most able, or just the boys, or those who wish to study the sciences. Ordinary day to day institutional requirements may be given a priority well beyond their importance. Organisation must serve three purposes:

- Provide a structure in which the routine tasks of a school can be carried on.
- Open the way for all of the students to undertake the studies which are of the most value to them.
- Create the best possible conditions for the teachers to perform their role for their students.

Any design of an organisation to satisfy all three purposes must give careful attention to the way time is used and to the form the timetable of activities takes in order to provide the best mix for the maximum number of students without sacrificing any group. Compromises are inevitable and the temptation is very strong to rationalise these two elements so that historic and teacher-centred factors take precedence over considerations that facilitate the best conditions for study. In this chapter the focus is upon the efficient use of time. The challenge is to use what time is available so that the youngsters can achieve more *without* putting greater stress upon teachers and even obtaining a release from pressure for both parties. The energy of the teacher is divided between routine and teaching functions—the school's primary aim and justification in society is fulfilled through the second purpose but the necessity to have order demands that some energy be given to the former. However, it behoves a school to minimise the former. Some teachers, wrongly, want to eliminate it altogether. Chaos, friction and even anarchy can arise and the opportunities for creative work can be almost completely lost if routine is neglected. But *creativity requires discipline and perseverance.*

The following diagram has the percentage of time/energy given to routine in the horizontal axis and the time/energy given to creative pursuits (those things the teacher does for the students) on the vertical axis. The area of the rectangle represents the total-energy available which will remain constant however the energy is dispersed.

Figure 14.



The organisation of the school must aim to limit routine and maximise the creative work of each teacher. The school represented 'A' must be less efficient as a learning institution than the school 'B'. Yet we often hear a school commended for being a 'tight ship', because considerable emphasis is given to routine and rules which, on analysis, detract from the chances teachers have to use the methods most likely to be effective. To attain the best conditions for learning, it will be necessary to take some risks as a part of the learning process.

In practice the cost of a small energy demand upon routine matters is in the rigid, unbreakable rules about regular procedures such as library bookings, sharing equipment, punctuality, safety and records. As conditions change in a school, so the rules must change. Every year Marion gives time to making sure that the procedures are as efficient as possible. Teachers record their itches: those with administrative tasks reveal their frustrations —and all are acted upon. To be consciously lax about routine is offensive to colleagues, because inevitably they waste their energy as a result. Teachers, like students, must understand that the price of their freedom to 'do their thing for students', that is, to perform their creative role, depends upon their willingness to be responsible about those regular practices which have direct effect upon others.

An old headmaster once told me—'get your routine structures firmed and efficient and insist upon them' and you will release your staff for 'wonders beyond your wildest dreams'. He had his routines in a book which made me think they could never be changed—and from time to time they must be—but the principle is sound.

A note of caution, however, is needed. This principle must be applied with sensitivity. Among the most committed able teachers, there will be some who are so mindful of their students, that they have little time for routine. While their neglect must not to be ignored, the sincere teachers can be spared the rod, by devising more generous ways of reminding them.

Use of Time

We can be pious about time—it is precious. Time lost can never be regained and it must not be wasted. Yet the staff of many schools waste untold numbers of hours trying to prevent bored, apathetic youngsters wasting time!

Many teachers feel guilty if they are not continually on the run. Yet my staff showed wisdom when they saw value in reducing the rush and the pressure. I suppose there is an optimum top pace for everybody. Once that optimum is exceeded, efficiency falls.

It is constructive to examine the work of a teacher in terms of the various components which take up time (and energy). At Marion we worked with a number of assumptions about time:

- That a teacher's working day is from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., or its equivalent, and that much of the recess and lunch break will be absorbed in discussions concerning school work or activity with students.
- That teachers may want to rearrange 'free time' to meet their personal needs or preferences.
- That the basic pressure on teachers arises because students are present and in their care throughout most of the working day.
- That teachers must attend staff meetings of all groups to which they belong and have responsibility. That a meeting concerning more than routine matters will take at least an hour to enable proper consideration and opportunity for all view points to be put and understood.
- That the school programme involves a teacher in preparation of materials, booking and arranging resources (including rooms) and special events, assessment of student's work, the use of other teachers, students, other school personnel or outsiders and (in) a long list of routine responsibilities.
- That the timetable should not be regarded as the sacred cow. That forward planning will allow better use of opportunities already available.
- That, in a student-centred school, students will be asking for assistance at almost any time.
- That teachers are required to communicate with parents and participate in school functions.

Figure 15.

LINE TIME TABLE AND EARLY LATE PLANNING SHEET February, 1981

MONDAY			TUESDAY			WEDNESDAY			THURSDAY			FRIDAY		
Yr Subj	Line	Teacher's Name	Yr Subj	Line	Teacher's Name	Yr Subj	Line	Teacher's Name	Yr Subj	Line	Teacher's Name	Yr Subj	Line	Teacher's Name

LESS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1	Line 2 (2 Yr 10 2/3)	4 (Yr 9 Enr)	3 (Yr 10 2/3)	1 (Yr 10 Enr)	2 (Yr 10 2/3)
2	1 (Yr 10 Enr)	4 (Yr 9 Enr)	3 (Yr 10 2/3)	1 (Yr 10 Enr)	2
3	5	5	1 (Yr 10 Enr)	5 (Yr 10 Enr)	5
	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS
4	6 (Yr 9 Enr)	7	5 (Yr 9 Enr)	7	1 (Yr 10 Enr)
5	6 (Yr 9 Enr)	7	5 (Yr 9 Enr)	7	1 (Yr 10 Enr)
	YEAR 11—LUNCH	YEAR 8—LUNCH	YEAR 10—LUNCH	YEAR 9—LUNCH	YEAR 12—LUNCH
6	4	3	2	6	6 6 7 4
7	3	6	4	2	8 3

The trick is to use well the time that is available without allowing the time structure to become master. It is useful for all teachers to review the ways they use time, and the proportions they allocate to each element of their work. Attention might be given to the length of the morning recess break. If, as seems likely, most teachers and students are at their most creative at that time of the day, then it will be useful in addition to the tea break, to have a break that is long enough, of say 30 minutes, to allow students to interact with teachers, and members of all parties to seek out resources (use the library, borrow an item of equipment, and so on). It might also be best to reduce the lunch break to 40 - 45 minutes because behaviour problems seem to escalate toward the end of a long break. Any arrangement which allows a more responsible, but less hectic day, must pay dividends in the ultimate amount of learning which can occur.

There are three other ways to reduce the pressure, given that the job keeps its talent for always wanting more time than there is. We can lengthen the school day without increasing the time students are structured for lessons and so reduce the number of students under the roof for much of the day. We can also have teachers in the classroom teaching mode for less time, and we can make use of other people.

EXTENDED DAY

The school services (office, cafeteria, and learning resource centre with all its parts) operate between 8 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. including breaks. The time table continued to be set up between 9 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. but teachers (and their students) had the option of moving a 2.30 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. lesson to 8 a.m., when students were more responsive. The idea of a morning lesson was popular. Not only was the pressure relieved but conditions were created between 2.30 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. when teachers could give students individual help. It was also a good time for both parties to use the various services, without feeling 'kept in'. Nobody was expected to spend more time, nor were checks kept but surveys showed that both students and teachers were inclined to embrace the opportunities the arrangement offered them.

USE OF OTHER PEOPLE

Ancilliary staff can help. Students have inside work experience as student tutors and monitors. Adult volunteer helpers can all make a teacher's work more effective, save energy and facilitate better use of time (see chapter 21).

RELEASE LESSONS

This concept is still in its infancy: teachers of senior classes were urged to release *most* of their class for at least one lesson each week. Normally those lessons would be largely 'baby sitting' tasks which students could do elsewhere. The remnant should be a small group which was selected because the students needed special help. The lesson's work would be added to the normal allotment of independent study (homework). It was expected that:

- Students could achieve *more* with slightly *less* direct teacher supervision.
- Routine tasks such as reading novels, writing essays, doing or recording experiments, reporting on study trips, completing models, collecting data, facts or ideas, answering questions or using the computer, do not need to take place in direct teacher contact time.
- The work would be set so that students were clear about what was required, and the dates when the work should be finished, to help the students budget their time. The work could incorporate the normal independent study plus as much as twice the work normally undertaken in class time, without taking more of a student's time.
- Release time for self-reliant learning is a privilege, not a right, and should be withdrawn if students abuse the privilege. While the process requires training, and there will always be some students who will childishly test the boundaries, the responsibility remains with the teachers. The objective of developing self-disciplined students is worth pursuing.
- Release time might be given on the day that a number of the class are away on another educational activity.
- Teachers should meet all their students at the beginning of the release lesson to identify individual needs or, for some special reason, make a change to the pattern.
- Some of the students for whom a need for special help has been identified, can be kept back for this purpose on each occasion.

As a departure from traditional forms, teachers tend to regard the reduction as a change to learning time and they do not make adjustments to the amount of work they expect students to complete outside the classroom. Persistent help will be needed if both teachers and students are to benefit and the temptation for teachers to drop into unprofessional ways is to be avoided.

The arrangements were popular with students who, overall, more than doubled their productivity during the release lesson period. Students appreciated the extra help and teachers gained satisfaction through being able to assist those in need. (They had declared that more time to give individual help was their most felt need.)

The level of responsibility which students are prepared to accept, increases as the students come to feel more control over their study pattern. Some teachers are surprised by the serious way students are prepared to consider using their time to better advantage. The lessons from which they are released had been largely ineffective, because even in the quietest work room, the noise (interference) level, was inevitably very high, especially late in a day.

TRAINING IN THE USE OF TIME

It was and still is necessary to train students to use their time effectively (see chapter 16). At first some seemed to be doing less homework, but their independent study time was actually increasing, partly through using their time more efficiently at school.

While I was overseas, I discovered other schools were reducing the time teachers spent formally with senior students. Recent learning theory seems to support this, as does classroom practice if one compares time allotments to similar courses of study across systems and even across any system which allows each school a degree of autonomy in the way it uses time. Around this State, for example, schools vary enormously in the class time given to each externally-examined matriculation subject. One would expect this to be an area of greatest uniformity, yet the time allotted varies from 180 to 285 minutes per week. The results in the various schools do not reflect any superiority for those who spend longest in class, but it is the teachers and students in this group who complain most about the work load. I observe that individual problems are met less often in the latter group of schools, because everybody feels so pressed by the long day that they are unwilling to spend any more time.

Marion, has for many years, given 160 minutes per week of year 11 and 12 time, and 230 minutes of years 9 and 10, to enrichment subjects (learning about possible leisure or even potentially vocational time pursuits). Yet the examination performances (see table in chapter 29) compare very favourably with State norms (the school population is very close to being a mini-sample for the State). There is no reason to anticipate that the examination results would have been better if this time was given over to study of core subjects. To many students, teachers and parents this defies logic and there are studies (J.I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School*, 1983) which show that more is learned when students give more time to a subject. But there is no conflict here because the aim is to use the same time more efficiently, and in conditions which are more conducive to educational productivity. (See chapter 16 — Independent Learning).

Once the advantages that can be derived from 'buying' time have been realised by teachers they can also become inventive about finding devices which help them use time better. It was sometimes the case that teachers, who had put themselves under stress, could relieve the pressure considerably by re-aligning the ways they spent their time. For example, a teacher who gave himself a huge marking load during a particular period, could, with little difficulty, arrange to spread the load over three or four weeks. Likewise a teacher, overburdened with preparation, could be led to discover that planning at a regular time one or two weeks or even longer ahead, can save huge amounts of time. The latter advantage can be added to, because forward planning facilitates arrangements by involving other people or other resources within or outside the school (e.g. specialists in subjects, the library, field work, laboratory or other workshops etc.).

There are other examples. Those given are sufficient, nevertheless, to demonstrate that, as the role changes, the ways in which time is used must also be reconstructed to enable the teachers to marshal their resources.

LESSON LENGTHS

The lengths of the lessons should be determined by the requirements of the methods which result in most learning (see chapter 14). Inevitably there are some compromises because all of the individual differences among the subjects, topics, students and teachers cannot be accommodated. But these are minor compared with the advantages which can accrue from a subject structure which is based upon seven lines or groups of subjects, right across the school, each with a proportionate share of time allotted to it. But the dimensions of these two elements (lesson length and number of lines) are arbitrary to the *process* of arriving at the best timetable (way of allocating time). The importance is such that the next chapter is devoted to a detailed description of what is involved.

23

ORGANISING THE TIMETABLE

No other element of school organisation is so vital to the teachers, yet the decisions which determine the structure and detail of the timetable are often shrouded in mystery and power play which make it unlikely that most teachers are able to understand it or to have an influence upon it. The resultant frustrations may have far-reaching effects on the methods used by teachers and the courses taken by students. In many instances in my experience the low morale of a staff and significant groups of students, can be traced to the mystique that is allowed to surround the timetable. Often power is manipulated through the timetable without regard to efficiency or desirable educational practices and outcomes.

Some timetablers are proud to explain that the process of making the timetable in their own school, begins in final term in order to produce tentative fruit early in the new school year. News of late staff changes are greeted by excited long faces, a prediction of long hours of work altering the timetable and promises of extensive upsets as a result.

This is a state of affairs that does nobody credit. The timetable should be a freeing mechanism for extending possibilities—subjects, learning strategies, staff movements—rather than a strait jacket whose rigidity is demonstrated by a broad expanse of variously coloured rectangles, circles and triangles. There should be several ways to resolve a difficulty through a process which is accessible to and readily followed by every staff member.

Distribution of Time

One reason for these indefensible complications is that schools have not addressed the counter pressures created by largely fictitious demands to adopt particular time patterns for each subject.

Like many schools Marion had a timetable derived from a traditional forty 35 - 40 minute periods each week. Some subjects, notably the crafts, had their allotment for each week as a block of three of these periods or 2 hours at one time. It was common for the day to be divided into three parts: 3 periods, 2 periods, 3 periods. Keeping the base, but with a desire to use the time more efficiently by including some 60 - 80 minute periods (see chapter 14) so that activity methods could be encouraged and, indeed made possible, an arrangement similar to table 8 emerges.

Thus the following time distribution emerged:

Table 8

Lesson	M	T	W	T	F
1	Line 2	4	3	1	2
2	1(7)	4	3	1	2
3	5	5	1	5	5
4	6	7	5	7	1
5	6	7(1)	5	7	1
6					6
	4	3	2	6	
	←—— (1 hour) ——→				
7					4
	3	6	4	2	
	←—— (1 hour) ——→				
8					3

At first some people will be unhappy about having double periods in year 8. However, the fear is unfounded and motivation is higher among students in all years when teachers are prepared to include some longer periods, so that they can adopt methods which are suited to the needs of their students.

To gain flexibility and accommodate standard sets of subjects, it is best to divide the week into a number of lines, i.e. groups of subjects that are undertaken across the school each time the line is denoted on the timetable. In this case there are 6 lines to which the equivalent of six 40 minute periods have been allotted and one equivalent to four 40 minute periods (line 7). If

Table 9

Lesson	M	T	W	T	F
1 line	1	2	3	4	5
2	1	2	3	4	5
3	2	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7	1
5	4	5	6	7	1
6	6	7	1	2	3
7	6	7	5	2	3
8	3	1	2	6	4

Table 10

Lesson	M	T	W	T	F
80 minutes	1	2	3	4	5
40 minutes	2	3	4	5	6
80 minutes	4	5	6	7	1
80 minutes	6	7	1(40) 5(40)	2	3
40 minutes	3	1	2	6	4

a programme consisting only of 40 and 80 minute periods (singles and doubles) is preferred, the time distribution can be modified to give a pattern similar to table 9, which may also be written in the way set out in table 10.

A simpler arrangement which allots the same time span (2 long and 2 short periods) for each line leads to table 11. An added advantage is the freedom to divide the 110 minutes or whatever time between breaks into preferred parts (we recommend 70 mins and 40 mins). Since 7 lines of 4 periods leads to 28 periods out of 30 in a week, there are two periods for other purposes, called X and Y in table 11. They can be placed to suit any special purpose. For example, the periods can be used for assemblies, special pastoral activities or allotted as an extra period for each line in turn as a bonus or as compensation for losses (e.g. holidays on Mondays, sports days).

Table 11

Lesson	M	T	W	T	F
1 (110 minutes)	1	2	3	4	5
2	2	3	4	5	6
3 (110 minutes)	6	7	X	2	3
4	7	1	Y	3	4
5 (110 minutes)	4	5	6	7	1
6	5	6	7	1	2

Table 12

Lesson	M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	7	5	6
2	2	3	7	5	6
3	1	1	1	1	1
4	8	4	2	3	4
5	8	4	2	3	4
6	5	7	6	8	7
7	5	7	6	8	8
8	3	6	5	4	2

In these arrangements some lines appear to suffer, because they appear more often in the afternoon. But what is a disadvantage to a subject in one year, is equally an advantage in another because the same subject appears on a different line for each year.

Table 13

Lesson	M	T	W	T	F
1	1	3	6	4	5
2	1	3	6	4	5
	P	P	P	P	P
3	2	4	1	5	3
4	2	4	1	5	3
5	7	2	7	1	6
6	7	2	7	1	6
7	5	6	3	2	4
8	5	6	3	2	4

Some schools like to operate with eight lines. The 5 units of time for each line would best be distributed as 1 single and 2 double periods. A distribution similar to table 12 results.

Some schools prefer to divide the day into 4 double units, i.e. all periods of longer duration (say 70 mins). If the day begins at round 9 a.m., it is not recommended on the grounds that youngsters are easier to teach and manage before the long lunch break. However it may not be too futuristic for some schools to follow other countries which begin school at 8 a.m., and have the long lunch break after 6 periods (table 13). A pastoral/information period can be included each day—denoted P—positioned in the day and of a duration that best suits the school.

Increasingly schools are adding the daily pastoral/information period to one of the line allotments to increase flexibility since the time needed to pass on information and arrange pastoral activities fluctuates considerably from day to day. For example, the distribution of time for line 5 in table 8 and line 1 in table 12 has been varied to enable this to happen each day. Hence the duration of the period becomes something like 50 minutes (or in table 8, 80 mins on Wednesday) and the time needed for information etc. is taken as required—from a minute or two on some days up to perhaps 30 minutes on a few special occasions.

In these examples pastoral relations time (class period, home group meeting or whatever this period is called) has not been listed at the beginning of the day. A more punctual, vital start with a lesson leads to a better pastoral period later in the day when teachers have had time to be better prepared and students can go straight off from the period to act upon something that concerns them. Hence, in the examples, the pastoral period has been placed immediately before a recess break on most occasions. There is an advantage in having the period after recess sometimes—teachers can be briefed about a matter just a few minutes before they are required to act upon it.

ALLOTMENT OF SUBJECTS TO A TIMETABLE

The allotment of subjects and the distribution of time are separate issues. A system should be developed which makes as many subjects as possible available to students. Since our history, matriculation and related accreditation, and teacher training all orient us toward subjects and courses, we must aim at a set of procedures that is efficient and readily able to be followed by teachers, parents and students.

Several principles should be the determinants of the subject timetable:

- Whatever is done should be open to staff scrutiny and encourage their participation. Over a period of years the timetable should be a source of educational creativity.
- What can be done (the maximum consistent with the resources available) should be controlled through
  - the framework adopted

    - the number of teachers available (i.e. the number of classes which can be held at a particular time)
    - the mean class size and the range of class sizes which are permissible.
- All subjects and levels of study should be given equal status.
- By assuring a cross-section of diverse interests and the equal rights of each section, the programme should enable students to follow either, courses of related subjects, open choice, or a combination of these.
- Each subject family should be given an approximately equal share of time during years 8 and 9.
- After year 9, research should be carried out to ensure students have access to the widest possible choice of subjects, irrespective of their ability or areas of interest.
- Forward planning and policy should guarantee to students and staff that the choices which are offered, will be honoured.
- The school should provide students with information and counsel without prejudice and accept the decisions of the students and their parents.

DISCUSSION

An attempt has been made to set the most flexible framework—one that, with only minor adaptations, can be kept over a number of years and have small variations in one year automatically taken account of in another year. A certain number of lines have been chosen for the whole school, and managed in a way which enables time to be distributed so that students achieve maximum productivity and learning. The structure is also adaptable in itself. It allows subsequently for a long list of alternative arrangements to be made to suit special requirements. Arrangements which differentiate between years, subjects or groups of subjects (courses) are less flexible, and when a school attempts a more diverse programme, it is likely that the distribution of teacher loads will become less efficient. As a result, teacher capacity will be wasted on supervision, on 'baby-sitting' lessons or from inability to allot a full load to each teacher. Although teachers and students alike dislike these arrangements, I have found huge wastage in many schools. In one extreme case, a school with about sixty teachers had allotted over 200 periods (the equivalent of nearly seven teacher-loads) in this way—a tragic waste and a strong source of discontent. Under-allotment of a fraction of staff by as little as one or two periods per week can be very costly.

It may not be inefficiency on the part of the person who prepares the timetable which leads to this wastage, because he or she may have been given a specification that has no solution except one which includes some periods to which it is impossible to allot the correct teacher.

If we only look at the individual case, these variations may seem finicky, but overall it can be serious. An example, by no means the worst, but typical among many schools I have visited, relates to a staff of 43 teachers. In that school:

	Periods
Year 11, 12 supervision	76
Year 9, 10 "	8
9 teachers 1 period underload	9
4 " 2 " "	8
3 " 3 " "	9
	110

Nobody thought any of these arrangements unusual or inefficient, yet they accounted for the full loads of 3.7 teachers. The same school made a special request for 2.4 teachers for remedial work and an additional librarian. By adapting more efficient ways of organisation, almost 4 teachers could have been available for these and other duties. It is not effectively justified by saying these teachers had plenty to do—of course every teacher has. In fact, most of the staff (and many students) were denied the help of an additional 4 teachers, and carried a share of the extra burden of a work equivalent of nearly 4 teachers. In effect, undeniably bad organisation reduced the staff by up to 4 teachers. Put another way, it accounts for the fact that many critics have the impression that some schools (Marion was one) receive special treatment when that is not true.

Repeatedly I have found that it is possible to introduce and staff a learning resource centre simply by removing inefficiencies in the way the school allots the work to its teachers. In many cases we could also reduce class sizes, especially in the lower years.

At root, the 'flexible' time-table, aims at:

- increasing the number of subjects which can be offered
- giving students access to these subjects
- efficient use of teachers
- efficient use of time
- making it possible for students to arrange changes after the timetable has been set
- minimum cost when a staff change occurs during a year.

The arrangement pre-supposes that a school will offer subjects in advance and keep its plan. That approach has important advantages:

- the choice offered is real and students know that the school is committed to it
- staff and resource planning is practicable
- the set subjects create 'expectations' in students and lift their confidence and commitment.

Fewer 'new' subjects will gain support if their inclusion is made to depend, at first, upon the numbers of students who nominate to take them. If the cut-off point is set higher than for a subject which has been included already (it commonly happens with senior school languages, mathematics and history), then the students have legitimate grounds for complaint.

A large subject listing (say 250 subjects) of which only 120 say, are actually committed, is not a choice for the students who elect any of the 130 subjects which are not finally taught. The student will be happier and planning is more certain if (on the basis of some research) a fixed 120 subjects are allotted according to a pre-designed distribution. (It may be possible to make a special arrangement afterwards as a bonus.) The overall statistical result will be the same, or better, and discrimination will have been avoided. In some of the schools I have visited, conservative elements on the staff have insisted upon some of the distinctions I have sought to avoid, as a deliberate ploy to keep new subjects, and the students for whom they are suited, out of the school. Since the reactionary group is likely to be upwards of half of the staff (see chapter 27) it will often be necessary for the school leadership to assert itself on behalf of those students for whom the alternative subjects are vital.

A better approach is to recognise that the student body will be diverse and build the line-offerings around a range of possible courses or groupings of related subjects and spread these across the lines (see later, step 3). In this way the school avoids the temptation for power groups to eliminate the students that they do not wish to teach, or, to keep out subjects which are more appropriate for certain sub-groups.

Most schools, in the lower years, require each child take more subjects than in the senior years. Often, long, largely pointless arguments are entered into about the number of periods per week to be allotted to each subject. Some schools try to compromise by having a timetable spread over more than five days (a week). These arrangements are not recommended because they create serious difficulties. The problems of time are *not* resolved (the week remains the same length), the school isolates itself from its community (helpers are harder to find), potential part-time students may not be catered for, students with part-time jobs are likely to be penalised, and knowing what day it is in the cycle, is a constant tension for teachers and students.

There are several ways to proceed. Subdivision into smaller time allocations can be made *within* the allotment to a line. Allotted to a line, the 6 units of time can be divided in a number of ways e.g. (3x2) units, (2x3) units, (4+2)

Table 14

	Group	Group	Group
	1	2	3
Period 1	A	B	C
2	C	A	B
3	B	C	A

units etc. But small weekly allocations of one or two units are not recommended. My research has shown that students work harder, and, learn and retain more, when the time is more concentrated. Thus two units per week for a year for 3 subjects, A, B and C, are better arranged as six units per week for a term each. To achieve this, the year group must be divided into three groups to enable the staff allotted to these subjects to be fully occupied throughout the year.

If two subjects are included, then the year group will be halved and the changeover will occur mid-year.

Table 15

	Group	Group
	1	2
Period 1	A	B
2	B	A

A (4+2) arrangement, is a variation of the (3x2) structure. Subject A is a double subject compared with B (cf. A, B and C in table 14).

It is useful to think of related subjects as a single subject family (e.g. performing arts, crafts) just as physics, chemistry, biology etc. have come to be regarded as one subject, science; algebra, geometry etc., mathematics; poetry, novel, writing etc., English. Allotted a line each, the teachers of each genre can be left to determine the proportions. It can also be left to the teachers of each family to determine the break-up of the students which best suits them.

The assumption that all of the classes in a 'subject-year' will be taught at the one time has two additional advantages:

Table 16

	Group	Group	Group
	1	2	3
Period 1	A1	A2	B
2	B	A1	A2
3	A2	B	A1

- The ability to move youngsters to higher levels, as soon as a student is ready, is an important part of motivation. This *must* be possible without any disturbance to the student's other subjects.
- Levelled classes (as distinct from 'set' classes) placed alongside each other bring closer communication between teachers. The standards of students' work are more likely to be set by the strong teachers who will provide models for those who are weaker, or less experienced. Team arrangements are also readily possible.

Some timetablers may claim that they lack the staff to cover all of the groups, but in fact the opportunities are greater than when other, more random arrangements are used. The claim often reflects a policy which regards the brightest classes as more deserving of the 'best' or 'most experienced' teachers, when the less able classes and the junior years really deserve teachers with no less experience and competence. Hence balance is more readily achieved, and 'hiding away the weaknesses' less critical, when all teachers have the opportunity to teach at all levels somewhere in the school. Morale is higher and there are fewer 'problem' classes. If there is a genuine lack of expertise for a particular subject (family) on a line, then of course there must be some sub-division, but with the possible exception of year 8, this is seldom necessary. On the other hand, the structure enabled Marion to divide the year 8 group so that some additional specialisation could be admitted by offering different numbers of lessons to some subjects (languages, art, drama, music). For example, a music specialist could study music for 2 more periods and take one less unit of each of art and drama.

In recent times semester subjects or even 10 week-long modules have become popular as a way of increasing the range of options a student may undertake. Basically the semester arrangement is no more than a way of concentrating 3 periods per week over a year, into a half year of 6 periods per week. The timetabler must be careful to ensure that the subjects are distributed so that each teacher is occupied during both halves of the year—the subject balance among the staff cannot be easily changed from one semester to another. Thus a block of subjects which occupy teachers V,W,X,Y and Z during the first semester must be chosen so that they are also needed for the second half of the year.

Table 17

	Subjects				
Semester 1	A (V)	B (W)	C (X)	D (Y)	E (Z)
2	H (X)	J (V)	K (W)	L (Y)	M (Z)

More than one year might be involved.

Table 18

	Subjects Year 8 (say)				Subjects Year 11 (say)				
1	A (V)	B (W)			C (X)	D (Y)	E (Z)		
2	L (Y)				J (V)	K (W)	M (Z)	H (X)	

There should be rules about class size! A school might set 30 as the maximum for an advanced, credit or standard single level class, and 23 for a multi-level, modified or basic group. Hence if 29 capable students of similar ability offer for a subject, one class can be formed, but if 31 want to take it then two classes, not necessarily of equal size should be formed. If the range of abilities of the group of 29 students is considerable, then the group should be divided. It might be that the group divides into 19 able to succeed at advance/credit/standard levels, and 10 at lower levels in the subject, but with the chance, if performance warrants it, of a student moving up into the more intellectually demanding group at some time during the year.

A school might also rule that a teacher is only to be allotted 4 out of 6 units of time for 6 - 10 students, and 3 out of 6 units for less than 6 students. (Because these teachers will be officially 'off' for the remaining periods on that line, they have a good deal of freedom about the way they use their time with the class.) My research showed that smaller groups benefit from *not* being exposed to their teacher for the full quota of lessons, probably because the students become too teacher dependent. In any case they have been exposed to more teacher contact and were subject to less disturbance than a student in a large class. A danger for small groups lies in a tendency to lose a 'sense of urgency', 'rigour' and a 'business-like approach' to lessons.

The line arrangements may lead to conservation of staff in a number of ways. When a subject is allotted for a particular year to one line, it may not be necessary to form as many classes as would be the case if another arrangement were used. A saving might also be made by establishing some vertical arrangements e.g. year 11 - 12 power mechanics, years 9 - 12 music or physical education. This is a good way to introduce a subject. Later if the numbers warrant it, the group might be divided on a yearly or some other basis. It might also be a better way to deploy staff to support different options and abilities.

Organising The Most Flexible Timetable

Out of these considerations we can arrive at a set of orderly practical steps which lead, with a minimum of fuss, to the best possible timetable.

Step 1 Establish time lines.
Step 2 Create the framework.

Step 3	Establish subject priorities (that all subject families will be offered, is assumed).
Step 4	Prepare on a matrix of seven, or whatever, lines, the programme for each year *separately*.
Step 5	Join the years.
Step 6	Allot classes.
Step 7	Fine tuning.
Step 8	Calculate staff required.
Step 9	Prepare the prospectus.
Step 10	Students make their choices.
Step 11	Plan teacher and student support services.
Step 12	Adjustments when the school year begins.
Step 13	Establish on-going process.

Step 1 *Time schedule*

It is useful to establish a time schedule for the various processes. Steps 1 - 7 should begin early in the previous year and be completed before mid-year. Steps 8 - 10 should be finished within a month of the beginning of the final term, so that enrolment and staffing processes can be monitored.

Step 2 *Create the framework*

To answer the question 'How many subjects can a school offer'? is really to answer the wrong question. The simple answer might be 'as many as possible', but that is not helpful.

The right question to ask is: 'How many classes can a school mount in each year, on each line (same number)'? A simple basic formula can arise out of class size thinking:

Years 8 - 10 $\frac{E}{25} + 1$ and Years 11 - 12 $\frac{E}{20} + 1$ (E = Enrolment)

When applied, 10 - 20% of the staff should have been kept for non-classroom, teacher-support duties. (See learning resource centre concept—

Table 19

Let us take an actual example (enrolment — 626)

Year 8	161	$\frac{161}{25} + 1$	= 7 +	classes*
Year 9	147		= 7	classes
Year 10	143		= 7 −	classes
Year 11	123	$\frac{123}{20} + 1$	= 7	classes
Year 12	52	$\frac{52}{20} + 1$	= 3 +	classes

*7+ classes means 7 classes on some lines and 8 on others.

chapter 15.) For a smaller school, adjust numbers 25 and 20 downward (to say 20 and 12), if the pupil/teacher ratio is lower. The divisors have been chosen as maximum *average* class sizes, and the (+1) introduced to demonstrate that the mean class size will be lower than that figure.

Each line then has 31+ classes it can fill. If for some reason classes are added, then some other classes must not be formed—the mean must not exceed 31+. *Check*: (31+) x 4/3 = 41 teachers are needed to teach the 31+ classes (assuming teachers spend 75% of their time in classrooms).

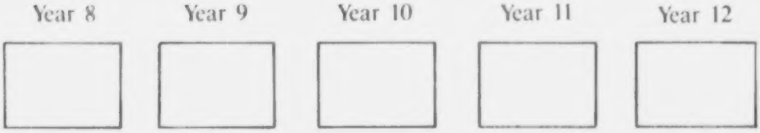
Compare this figure with the number of teachers who comprise the full staff and adjust if necessary.

Full staff: 626 enrolments—51.3 teachers (1984 formula).

Thus, without creating any over-size classes in any year or in the more popular subjects, the equivalent of about 10 (19%) teacher-loads are available for other purposes (including administration). It also means that it will be possible to include some additional classes.

Then, on a large sheet of paper, draw up a matrix upon which all of the lines are set out one under the other, on a single sheet of paper. Each year should be separated from the year before and after it, forming a set of individual columns thus:

Figure 16.



One row like this for each line—each rectangle should be large enough to be divided according to the number of classes which are allowable.

Figure 17.

e.g. Year 9, 7 classes

It will pay to make the blocks fairly deep, as in the example, so that the initials of the teacher for each class can be written in later, under the subject name.

Step 3 *Establish subject priorities*
On what basis should subjects be allotted? How many can a school offer? One simple approach, which has helped in numbers of schools, works upon the assumption that, irrespective of the size, the school population will include students who represent the full cross-section of interests and needs.

Subjects can be grouped under a number of headings:

English
Traditional humanities and languages
Mathematics
Sciences
Performing arts (including PE), art and design
Technology/technical studies
Business studies
Studies in human care and personal development

Alternatively, this more traditional set of subject groupings might be replaced by the framework envisaged in the South Australian Education Department's statement (1981) called 'Our Schools and their Purposes—Into the Eighties'. Interpreted as subjects, a similar cross-section of a 'broad and balanced range' of learning experiences can be listed. The subject families will be drawn from:

Environmental education
Health and personal development
Human society
Language studies
Mathematical studies
Science—Technology
The arts
Transition education

A good basis is to list all the possibilities under each heading, arrange each set in priority order, and make sure that every group is represented right across the years. (See 'equal esteem for all learning'—chapter 13).

Suggestions will present themselves, but if a school is unsure about the priorities of interest in each group, it might ask students to choose say five from a list of possibilities which does *not* include certainties and does not offer the subjects conditionally against other choices. As the years pass, additional subjects from each interest group can be added or subtracted according to interest and need. If the number of enrolments falls to an uneconomic level, the expectations which have been given can be honoured, *but notice given* that the subjects will be withdrawn after say two years. It may be that the popularity of the subject proves to be very low, and after investigation of the prospects for the next year, it can be withdrawn from the offerings for the following year, and maybe another subject substituted from the same major group, or from another group. In this way, reasonable control is kept and nobody is deceived into thinking the choice will be larger than it can be.

If semester subjects are included then they should be included as alternatives at this stage of the planning. The length of a course has no special magic of its own. Marion, for many years, operated its programme with 6 week, term-long, half-year, year and two-year courses (subjects) all operating concurrently. The important thing is that all of these arrangements should be planned together, following the steps outlined here, because it is essential that staff and resources should be used consistently for the full year.

I have carried out these processes manually and with a computer. The manual process can be quicker and less messy. Most of the decisions are professional judgements: the computer can only tell us what will *not* work in terms of what we ask— this is *not* useful final knowledge. A useful programme would have to be based on the steps that are outlined in this chapter and give the students access to an arrangement of subjects which fits their needs. Later, when the students have made their choices, the computer could be invaluable for controlling and storing data and for recalling it in various useful forms (e.g. a summary of each student's course, classes and other facts).

Step 4 *Prepare the programme for each year separately*

Next we can take each year and allot the subjects to it. In our example, the estimated enrolment of 123 students in year 11 is sufficient for an average of 7 classes on each line.

In distributing the subjects, some can appear on more than one line to increase choices, and specialist groupings and subjects can be included in their own right and as members of a course of related subjects (both approaches are legitimate).

The example, taken from one school, from which an *extract* is set out, included all the subject groupings described above.

Figure 18.

Year 11

Line a	M1		Bus. M	App. M	
b				Tech. Drg.	
c*	Pc	Gg	Bi	Art	Ec
d	Eng				
e	M2			Metals Tech.	
f	Gmn		Bi	Bldg. Tech.	
g	Ch			Design	

(the number of lines was decided previously)

* = one class above the quota

Table 20

Table of Random Numbers (Digits)

Row No.										
1	50691	91653	88574	08675	12700	32027	41034	56912	34264	77769
2	19787	66937	91769	13399	96096	43165	72096	86350	23062	99419
3	16746	77983	10861	23664	64557	78213	43857	68009	20483	00618
4	91039	16099	38824	00778	23058	76539	50584	71810	52589	32778
5	11075	62081	88977	78676	53855	56472	13090	01708	89016	45111
6	41230	92934	30342	29933	24597	72632	21727	63861	80454	47243
7	59028	24399	05075	64775	59803	45737	19025	46696	18914	03062
8	42957	25204	00753	60284	85483	34984	86637	95354	80698	98750
9	45881	59475	64445	98261	55252	50788	31295	16437	49497	22493
10	75104	45819	88471	75440	55309	63481	23616	64950	73291	10964
11	78614	07347	63528	84643	10455	95596	38158	75758	65628	10498
12	69278	59274	67459	53563	98241	18097	65297	49803	99145	25320
13	58626	91259	13832	75095	08333	53845	74223	82690	89320	89565
14	81630	00339	07996	65249	66792	05555	79169	12136	44621	95904
15	74330	13688	02044	65910	96007	82692	40473	56437	35671	95072
16	70829	66963	86390	26458	02385	41505	06239	68990	32915	89542
17	55084	58581	60759	20627	86682	76542	03648	38183	29823	68134
18	98845	17428	97397	62400	51284	92211	40593	82713	06067	46190
19	48116	91870	16346	97406	54649	42039	58407	84248	45780	60547
20	82778	31709	71564	26258	07522	03825	92087	21809	25678	39987
21	86615	67618	07446	63129	07111	70516	67289	09457	48995	08043
22	82558	99260	69136	35099	68187	85382	09569	94211	57824	98100
23	08290	70291	74090	96503	56140	27794	27765	51740	07712	29816
24	95062	76310	81603	86828	68370	46001	79205	35511	91239	52961
25	30361	66712	86801	29556	91232	98295	87322	99172	50009	27224
26	17390	96107	70391	78715	61943	33315	39778	97149	08122	86388
27	05390	33046	63920	28733	42644	38972	98161	79861	88282	28279
28	06624	21114	33869	20940	03732	39973	89948	81060	36381	06027
29	38146	77295	33742	00135	26587	54775	94846	18587	39327	71711
30	76430	28645	62335	60393	71813	52677	09917	89100	93855	75617
31	16664	30164	22546	63538	79376	26865	61995	60418	37777	84170
32	56424	64680	81038	79364	23815	44002	38380	09864	35950	10760
33	95954	15540	18554	63349	70259	03212	91950	16214	80378	56421
34	59007	56364	49965	61970	32493	55404	85950	99606	46328	17887
35	19341	87208	99853	40202	08553	78731	83463	19524	82512	13556
36	24505	87007	35748	54865	40209	49466	94574	31406	64422	87185
37	15086	92183	84632	36790	59608	00371	67456	55361	80669	75402
38	65664	02188	09164	70939	25856	24344	58859	10454	19212	59078
39	40397	76835	14062	96067	70645	23695	59140	75812	18804	55529
40	31700	24753	22919	43207	83387	27820	12494	30041	88927	22668
41	14472	19372	23759	47116	81647	44946	97716	41157	30913	30842
42	18018	57089	98428	89075	77511	15194	69634	68269	52292	63404
43	16752	54266	76103	05268	41145	36100	73916	32462	01658	68565
44	47184	33660	96555	56656	18238	56888	29315	99813	47831	81395
45	93884	63945	06606	45545	29237	21040	43552	02749	19963	23705

('Programme Evaluation Guide', California State Department of Education, 1977, p.C30)

For example, a course might include say applied mathematics, technical drawing, metals technology and building technology. Among the maths options a particular student may have a choice (on one line) between say maths 1 and applied maths. Technical drawing and metals technology would also be on separate lines. Students, with an interest in this area, may choose both or one of them, according to their own understanding of their needs and whichever mathematics course suits them best.

The pattern of subjects which results from these deliberations should be tested by putting the draft before a statistical one-third sample of the students (one-half if the number is between 60 and 100, larger proportion for smaller groups) in a year. The best way to select the sample, is to use the set of random numbers which have been provided. Starting anywhere, e.g. upper left hand corner and reading horizontally is convenient—we need to locate the first 41 different numbers in the range of 001 to 123, and apply them to an alphabetical list of the students in the year. Using the first 3 digits only—506 is not in the range and 86, 108, 6, 7, 110 are the first five appropriate numbers. Sometimes a sample is selected by taking 1st, 4th, 7th etc. person from class lists, but biases are more likely to appear. While it takes a little time to select a reliable random list overall, it will be quicker than processing the full complement of 123, yet give an equally reliable result.

The data will show the incidence of clashes and the probable numbers (multiply the raw number by 3) opting for each subject. We can now modify the distribution of subjects (and maybe add options) to relieve the conflicts and set the correct number of classes on each line. It then pays to retest using another sample of students (e.g. could read the table vertically, or go on where the previous set stopped). This process should be repeated for each year.

Step 5 *Join the years*

After the subjects for all five years have been distributed separately, the lines can be constructed so that the subjects (staff) are distributed across the school

Table 21

Year Line	8	9	10	11	12
1	Sc/	E		Pc	M
2	M/	Sc		E	(M2)
3		M		Bi	Pc/Bi/E
4	/E		M	C/Bi	
5	/Sc		E	M	C
6	E/M		Sc		
7				(M2)	Bi/E

to enable a broad sweep of subjects (teachers) to be included on each line. While the subject groupings will be somewhat mixed, a simple chart on which English, mathematics and sciences are distributed will give a guide and a setting in which other subjects fall into place without great difficulty.

Step 6 *Allot classes*

Transfer this rough distribution to the framework (step 1). Using your knowledge of the current year, rules about class-size, the research data about numbers and numbers of classes, the subjects/classes can be filled in. In our example, year 10 will have 7 classes on each line. If the subject grouping for, say, line 3, is geography, art, drama, photography and plastics, the data from sampling student choices (step 3) will give a reliable indication of the numbers for each subject (distribution from a previous year may be an adequate guide). While the rules about class size should be adhered to, and some places left in classes which are likely to increase by the time the classes begin (new subjects and those popular with lower and middle ability students), it does not pay at first to be too generous because an extra class can be created later with little difficulty, and generosity of this kind tends to eliminate real possibilities of including additional subjects later.

Table 22
Year 10

line 3	Gg	Gg	Ar	Ar	Dr	Ph	Pl

By looking along each line, opportunities can be found to save classes by vertically grouping those with small numbers (e.g. year 11 German (5 students) with year 12 German (2 students) or by opening a class (subject) to students in more than one year). A little readjustment will be needed to align the subjects for which vertical groupings are appropriate. If this device is used extensively, it may be useful to prepare the programme (step 3) for two years at the one time (e.g. years 11 and 12 may include year 11 subjects, year 12 subjects and those available to both year 11 and 12 students).

The number of classes should not exceed the number on the matrix, unless classes have been conserved on another line (e.g. year 10 maths allotted to six classes instead of seven). At the end of this step, the total number of classes saved, should be counted (see step 10).

Normally, through conservation of classes in various ways, opportunities to allot additional subjects, will have been created. It is common in my experience for schools to discover that they have the capacity to offer much more in years 10, 11 and 12 than had seemed possible. In our example the number of teachers available for support roles is high, so we can proceed with confidence and offer more. (Remember that we are not now concerned about numbers except for maxima unless small numbers suggest vertical grouping. We can balance loads when we distribute the classes—a teacher with a small class can be given a larger or difficult class in another year.)

Step 7 *Fine tuning—check resources*

Once the subjects have been allotted (this step may take three or four hours but it will not need to be repeated in as much detail in future years), fine tuning can occur in several ways.

1 *Check that teachers are available.* The current staff can be used for this purpose. Surpluses and deficiencies should be noted, and changes in staffing for the new year can take these into account. It will be the small subjects, not the big groups, which will need the most careful attention.

2 *Check that the number of classes does not exceed the number of essential workshops.* (Science teachers at some levels may not use a laboratory every lesson—but art, craft, drama teachers must have a workshop available.) If the number of classes which are anticipated exceeds the supply, then the subject must be repeated on another line to reduce the number of students (and classes), which are required on that line. Step 4 would have helped to ensure that maximum use is made of these facilities. History and geography or a popular performing art or fine art may be distributed to increase choice (check back to 1 and 2).

A school may like to test its work at this stage with a dry run. It is advisable to use a sample (cross section) of students to save time and to make it clear to all that the students are not, at that stage, being made a firm offer. Because there are numbers of variables, the results of the dry run should be taken in conjunction with experience from past years (e.g. the tendency for numbers of students in classes which are popular with less able students to increase later).

The work so far will not have taken a huge amount of time. The grid is readily understood by others on the staff who should have been given opportunities to make suggestions and understand the parameters of any restraints. The approach has removed the mystery and any basis for cynicism, and encouraged support and participation. The timetable that has been prepared is subservient to proven educational principles. At no stage has an offer been made and then, at the point of implementation, been withdrawn because it cannot be carried through into practice.

3 *Allotment of staff can proceed immediately.* There will be some gaps because some teachers may be leaving, but they will be replaced.

The timetabler's part in this step is an easy one. The grid shows the number of teachers needed for each subject. Start with the subjects for which the choice of teachers is most restricted (e.g. there may only be one drama teacher so she/he must be allotted first to the lines involving drama).

The senior can and should be invited to co-operate in the selection and have the responsibility for allotting the teachers to the classes within each particular group. The senior's proposal can be discussed, modified (if need be), and recorded. In my experience all sorts of useful communication of an *educational*

Figure 19.

SUBJECT COMBINATIONS FOR 1980 (Revised 11-2-80)

Line	8TH YEAR Madigan	 Wilkins	9TH YEAR	10TH YEAR	11TH YEAR	12TH YEAR
1	Sci. (4) Craft (2)	Art Des Mus Dram. (6) *Sp. Dram.* (4)	English (Typing)	Enrichment	Anc. Hist. App. Science Geography Art Physics Clerical Stud.	Industrial Maths Business Mathematics Mathematics 1 Mathematics IS
2	Maths (6)	Geography (3) History (3)	Science	French Design German Metalwork History Typing Art Commercial B LINE 2-3 Japanese Plastics History Photography Design Music A Woodwork Commercial A	English	Australian Hist. (SSC) Geography (PEB) Mathematics 2 Biology (PEB) Home Economics Technical Studies
3	History (3) Geog. (3)	Languages (6)	Mathematics	Geography Photography Art Drama A Home Ecs Spec. Phys. Ed Plastics Commercial A Music P	Selected subjects	Classical Studies Physics Applied Sci. Advanced Stenography Bus. Typing & Pitmans Biology
4	Lang. *(6)*	English *(6)*	Geography Home Ecs Woodwork Music P Metalwork Spec. Phys. Ed Plastics Drama A (Commercial B-1981) Enrichment (2)	Mathematics	Economics Shorthand Japanese Home Ecs Biology Food & Catering Chemistry Metalwork Music A	English Japanese Modern European History Geology Art Food and Catering
5	Phys. Ed (6) *Spec. Mus.* (4)	Science (4) Craft (2)	French Art German Design History Drama P (Commercial B-1981) Enrichment (2)	English	Mathematics (1 unit) Biology Business Calculations	American History Contemporary World History Biology Chemistry Economics Music H I
6	English (6)	Maths (6)	History Metalwork Japanese Photography Design Music A Woodwork Shorthand (Commercial A-1981) Enrichment (2)	Science	French Com. Intensive German Design Geography Woodwork Mod Hist Plastics Social Sci. Clothing & Text Industrial Sewing	Geography (PEB & SSC) English French German Social Sci Industrial Sewing Special Phys. Ed
7	Art Des Mus Drama (4) *Sp. Lang.* (2)	Phys. Ed (4) *Spec. lang.* (2)	History Plastics Geography Home Ecs Art Photography Commercial A or Typing 1981	History Metalwork Geography Home Ecs Drama P Woodwork Commercial B	Enrichment	Enrishment Music P. T

( ) = number of periods/week

nature can occur. Teachers can be alerted and begin their preparation at an unhurried pace.

The most valuable thing is that the senior (or faculty leader) comes to 'own' his/her subject. The faculty leader has 'control' over his most valuable resource—the teachers. On the grid, the areas of his/her responsibility will be clear.

During these three processes, seniors or teachers may suggest some minor improvements. When these checks and changes have been completed the school may like to open the plan to general scrutiny and invite suggestions.

Step 8 *Calculate staffing required*

On the basis of the numbers of classes in each subject, and the allotment of teachers who are expected to be available, the needs for the next year can be listed in fractional form (junior history 0.4, chemistry 0.5 etc.) before the time the school must make its needs known to the employing authority within or outside the school. Teachers who are leaving will be known or their intentions anticipated with fair accuracy. With the data a school has, it is now able to monitor staff appointments over the next few months.

The guarantees which can accompany the allotment of subjects will almost certainly increase retention so that numbers become conservative—expectations are built up, and all parties feel they can contribute. Knotty problems and conflicts can be avoided. Experience and some action research at Marion, have suggested that decisions about the length of secondary schooling are most commonly made by parents (mothers) and students either when they first enter secondary school or at about the time adolescent independence occurs (14+ years of age). The decision is based on current achievement levels and the offerings in the senior years *at that time*. *Promises* about subjects have little influence and few change their minds when the school introduces a subject later. Hence there must be a time-lag between the year a subject is introduced and the time at which it gains its full share of support.

Step 9 *Prepare the prospectus*

We can now prepare a prospectus for the next year. We can assure students that every subject on the list will be taught. If it is the practice to level whenever the numbers are large enough, then two or more classes on the same line will always represent classes with different intellectual capabilities.

Step 10 *Students make their choices*

This book strongly recommends that students should be allowed to make their choices with as little restriction as possible. 'Choose your subject—your achievement so far will determine the level of study!' With training and experience senior students show sound judgement in choosing the level at which they wish to study each subject. The teachers (may I suggest the home group teachers) might distribute copies of the prospectus and give the students as much information as they can *without prejudice*. The students, after a space of several days, should return their application forms. There will have been time for parents and students, to make appointments and have their questions answered in ways which give them information but leave the final choice with them. The counsellor (or a small group of people like deputy principals who are able to give general advice and have no axes to grind) should then go through the application forms and identify the small group who *appear* to have made a bad choice. These people should be counselled and then *left to decide* whether they wish to make alterations to their application. (If the form is not completed properly, that is another matter).

In my experience only 10 - 15% of the students need post-counselling (i.e. counsel beyond basic information—a considerable saving in time and effort), and perhaps half of these students will accept the 'advice', but in hindsight, few will have decided unwisely. Students will be serious about the choices they make because they have the privilege of deciding (as a right). Self-discipline is given a considerable lift. I have been in schools, many overseas, where an extensive 'counselling' service was accurately seen by the students as a form of manipulation designed for the comfort of the power-status group of the teachers. In the long term, this is disastrous for student *and staff* morale. Even in the short term, hidden agendas soon become clear. For example, attempts are made to channel students into certain subjects, or they are advised not to do a subject for reasons of personality, not intellect, need or interest. Students should not be forced into situations which deprecate their sense of responsibility for their growth, and destroy their self-concept. Teachers of the able students need not fear that opening up choice will adversely affect the number or quality of the students who choose their subjects. (The need to play unprofessional elimination games, is not wise even on selfish grounds.)

After these adjustments, the numbers can be totalled (line, subject and maybe level) and the distribution checked against the plan. Carried out before new staff numbers are appointed, adjustments can, if necessary, be made to the qualifications of the replacement staff. If eligibility for a class depends on some dreadful assessment game, the students' selection of subjects should not be dependent upon the results. Students should still be accommodated to be taught at an appropriate level, and any minor adjustments to numbers can be made later.

Step 11 *Plan teacher and student support services*

Let us return to our example. We estimated that about ten teachers would not be needed to staff the classroom programme of the school.

Suppose that by adding subjects (classes) or because the numbers who are entering a subject have grown sufficiently to cost us one or two classes, the number has been reduced a little.

First calculation = 10.3 teachers available.

If 4 classes were added (2 subjects, 2 extra classes needed to accommodate numbers, i.e. 4 x 6 = 24 periods or .8 teachers.

Therefore, second calculation—(10.3 - 0.8) = 9.5 teachers are available. When the number of classes which we were able to conserve, was added up, suppose the total was 12, representing 12/5 = 2.4 teachers (5 classes = 30 periods or 1 teacher's load).

Hence the total number available for Learning Resource Centre and Administrative duties is (9.5 + 2.4) = 11.9 teachers.

Administrative/promotion positions account for (third calculation):

Principal	1.0	
Two D/P's	1.4	(teach 2 subjects each)
Counsellor	0.7	(teaches 2 full subjects)
Seniors	2.0	(10 x 0.2)
	5.1	teachers

That leaves 11.9 - 5.1 = 6.8 teachers for learning resource centre duties (see Chapter 15). If the learning centre is open from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. continuously each day, it will take 1.4 teachers to make one teacher available throughout a day, or an average of about 5 teachers can be available at any one time. Experience will enable this number to be varied through each day to cope with the demand at particular times.

They might be allotted as follows:

Library/resource centre	2.0
Computer room	1.4
Field or outdoor education	1.0
Learning centre	2.0
Reading centre	0.4
	6.8

This school also had a multicultural teacher who was not included in the calculation because her salary came from another source and, the appointment was outside the staffing formula. She joined into the general support team, felt less isolated and the complete team contributed to her work. Her special expertise expanded the effectiveness of the whole group.

The figure of 7.8 for the learning resource centre was properly regarded as minimal for a school of that size. To that end, dialogue was initiated and staff members who understood the advantages of the services, made suggestions about how additional classes might be conserved. In addition, some teachers volunteered extra time, especially during 'busy' lines. As a result the learning centres were operated by 8.4 teachers (6.8 + 1.0 + 0.6). A good group of volunteers added their time and expertise, once the new year got underway.

Step 12 *Opening Adjustments*

When school opens, some minor alterations may be necessary, usually for only three reasons—the senior decides to make some changes, after consulting with a new appointee—a class may become over-crowded because some students have requested a change, or new enrolments have altered the balance, necessitating the establishment of an extra class—sometimes a class can be conserved elsewhere.

If the enrolment increases beyond the estimates, additional appointments might be made which take up 'the extra' classes or add to the support services staff. A serious shortfall in enrolments may mean loss of staff—this is the worst eventuality because it is difficult to achieve at this stage without a breakdown in the balance of the expertise available. (The latter *is not* likely, if planning was well done. But the planners should be prepared for some pain in the first year, in spite of careful research because there are often local factors which may not be immediately apparent.)

Step 13 *Establish on-going process*

Now established and open to staff for comment and suggestion, an on-going process can be established which leads to modifications for future years.

Overlay Options—Additional Advantages

The timetable, as outlined, is related to a general time distribution which is the most effective in the classroom on a continuing basis.

But, from time to time there will be exceptions which apply equally to all subjects. We are familiar with the claims of study trips of various kinds, special events, study camps and stay-at-home camps, and some of the 'celebrations' discussed in chapter 10. The study arrangements, which lead to this so-called disruption, add vital interest to the school—give a sense of reality—and should be seen as an essential part of the total programme.

24

COMMUNICATION

In general, school people are not good at communicating, yet it is not uncommon for staffs to place bad communication at the top of their complaints' list. They steadfastly accuse the leaders in the school of bad communication yet few people try harder to get their message across than school principals, deputy principals, seniors and Education Department officers. However, teachers, because of what their job is, believe that they are good communicators. The circumstances which drew my attention to this matter led me to conclude that the teaching profession, like many other groupings of specialists tend to be bad listeners, and as such, poor communicators.

Why? Most people in the extended education world think that communication flows from them to the audience. Their judgement of the quality of the message is based on its clarity to them (the givers). Little attention is given to getting the message properly received by the audience—other teachers, students, parents and members of the wider community.

Then, as educators, there are the problems that arise from our busy complex lives. So many messages are available, that we shut off our 'receivers', and so do others in the education community of a school (parents, students, public). We only turn on when we perceive that it is important to ourselves. Here is a difficulty—we judge before we get to the evidence, or we judge on somebody else's say so. Thus, if child Johnny brings home a message and tells Mum it is not important, there is a very good chance that she will not read it. Alternatively as receivers we put aside messages which do not demand immediate action. Later we forget about the action and accuse the 'giver' of not 'giving'.

We also forget that communication is a two-way matter. We must not only get our message into receivable form, but we must also learn to be a listener as well. Why should the receiver heed a message from a giver who fails to listen to the reply?

My response as a teacher and school principal to these perennial problems arises from my acknowledgement of the need to communicate well, the nature of the problems poor communication causes and a sympathy for the situation of the audience. I have been forced to study my audience and to frame my message within their experience world. A number of unexpected and disappointing responses made me consider how I should frame my message.

I soon found that it was vital for me to take whatever steps would optimise my chances of at least having the message received.

What steps would improve my chances? Timing would be vitally important and I would have to be prepared to repeat the message whenever a person asked, because it was then that my target person was ready to receive it. It would not serve my purpose to say, to write or even to suggest to people that they had lost their chance or that they should go and find the original! It was essential that there were always some spare copies for those who claimed that their copy had been lost or had not been received.

My audience had to accept the disciplines of giving and receiving (listening) as well as I, the sender, if we were to communicate with each other well. Maybe I could encourage the other parties to both 'give out' and 'listen' by being as good a model as I could possibly be.

A quick survey of ideas from the communication experts is useful. A management expert once instructed me about the wisdom of following up a verbal message with a written summary. The prime reason was *legalistic*. While most of my messages could be safely 'forgotten', there were some in which the details were important to a ready 'receiver' or 'group of receivers' and I learned to write them down and forward copies. The second reason was *clarification*. The written copy helped the 'receiver', upon reflection, to get the matter clear. Lastly, the written message *acknowledged* the 'giver's' *concern* for the receiver who might otherwise forget all or part of the message. I have found that 'receivers' do appreciate this kind of consideration, and respond better because as 'giver' I made them important 'receivers'. By taking the trouble to make a copy for them, I gave the matter special significance. This last point made it important to treat only significant matters in this way. If I overdid it, all of my messages became less noteworthy.

What kind of messages do people receive most willingly? On many occasions I have withdrawn a message because, on examination, there was something about it that might be misunderstood or bring a wrong response. In general it has paid off, but I have not always been successful in striking the right note! I remember well, soon after I took up an appointment as principal, commenting to a teacher, quite accurately, that the examination results of the school in the previous year had been poor. My error was that I was talking to a staff member who had a splendid record. He took my remark personally and quite reasonably felt the injustice of my remark. It took a long time to erase the effect of that early indiscretion.

When the audience was mixed, the task was probably an impossible one, yet we must do our best to steer an optimum path. Then I had to be ready to listen to any responses which came.

What constitutes good listening? The following ideas are gleaned from various sources:

- *Attending skills*
  - See to the physical comfort of the person—light not in their eyes, face the person squarely, at arm's length.

  - Show interest—sit quietly, lean forward, eye to eye, refrain from talking—this helps the talkers think about what they are saying (e.g. nod, smile, saying Mmmmm, right!, I see!, O.K.!, yes! will help their train of thought).
  - Observe body language—is person relaxed, hands unclenched?
- *Responding skills*

  Give accurate feedback to show you understand the *content*, and the *feeling* behind what the person or persons have been saying. Do this by paraphrasing and summarising. Do not add thoughts of your own too early, as it confuses the issue. *Clarify* what you have heard, e.g. Is this what you meant? I got the feeling you . . . ? Does what you said mean . . . ? This will show you understand, accept and respect what has been said, and will enable talking to continue effectively, as you explore the issue further together, and maybe come to some decision about further action.

Getting the Message Across

Once I worked for a head who deluged us with paper and messages. Staff meetings in that school were made up of a long list of messages. I used to ignore the paper and not listen to the messages. My staff would do the same if I made the same error. The messages had to be sent in packages of reasonable size.

What will constitute the most attractive 'packaging'? We are in a mixed media age, and we know that the advertiser uses catchy brief messages. We know that things seen are better remembered than things heard. We know that gimmicky presentations help if they are used sparingly. We know that special occasions make a good context for presenting a relevant package. We also know that the immediacy of the action sharpens reception. 'A picture can be worth a thousand words', so we should use pictures, illustrations and diagrams to summarise messages whenever that is possible.

Messages which are designed to bring an audience response, however trivial, are better remembered. Complex matters will need discussion, and time for questions and answers to ensure clarity. It may be useful, when some action is required, to prepare possible responses and then, after some discussion of them, to suggest the steps which will probably need to be taken.

Bad communication creates a block between the 'giver' of the message and the 'receiver'. On the other hand, bridges between people can be built through a properly constituted message. The following chart lists characteristics which are particularly helpful, or not helpful to the way the message is framed. If the words are spoken, then the 'body language' must support the words, e.g. encouraging words delivered in a disapproving atmosphere, perhaps without a smile or relaxed expression, will be missed, and the disapproval registered. Or the actions might say 'but' when the words describe a way of building up a person's performance.

Some people wrongly interpret Figure 20 to mean that we may only praise and never criticize. That is not so. Few people reject criticism that is couched in terms which are personalised (i.e. use 'I' statements), state specific details about the objection, and suggest a possible solution to the problem. For example, 'John, I find your way of replying is offensive. It would be far more helpful to me if you made your point this way . . . '

Figure 20.

COMMUNICATION

BLOCKS	BRIDGES
BAD	GOOD
Coercing	Jointly exploring
Moralising	Empathising
Judging	Genuine liking
Disapproving	Concrete (specific)
Rescuing	Showing desire to praise
Playing God	Building on strengths
But . . .	
however . . .	Encouraging

Encouragement recognises effort and specific areas of improvement. It focuses on people's strengths, the things they have contributed, our appreciation of their effort, and upon the gains that they have made. At best a message of encouragement will be praising and personalised, and it will describe the successful features of a person's contribution. What is true about communication between adults is equally true when children form one of the parties, as happens in schools and in families.

The aim is to enhance the person's concept of himself. Many people feel threatened in their relationships with those whom they perceive as their superiors. A.T.Jersild, in his book *In Search of Self*, referring to children, remarks that,

> Many children find the educational scene so filled with failure, so full of reminders of their limitations and so harsh in giving these reminders that . . . school is such a threat to their self-picture that it is intolerable. (Jersild, 1972, p.18)

The 'significant' people in children's lives (including teachers) give them the basis for their appraisal of themselves, and any negative self-images they develop are not easily changed. What Jersild has said of children will apply equally to adults and for some, the scene will be the whole of life. Hence, in our dealings with others, since the only useful aim is to promote growth, we will get best results if we are seen to be building them up, and to be recognising that they have an important role in a partnership with us. Constructive criticism will be one ingredient in gaining their co-operation and in bringing about growth.

How does all of this affect the school community where there is a need for hundreds of messages to pass between the principal and teachers, students, parents, and others?

For the principal, we could substitute—deputy principal, faculty leader, a teacher, a student leader, parent leader and so on. Is it true that a principal who listens is a principal who is listened to? Maybe! I think my chances improved as I became a better listener.

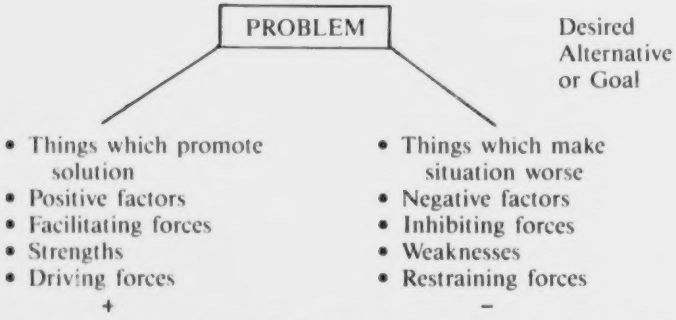
OPENING UP AN ISSUE

Many teachers, parents and students approach a difficult problem from one direction only, and fail to realise that they are not taking account of many other factors and influences which could legitimately affect discovery of the best solution.

In his paper 'Problem Analysis as a Step in Problem Solving', Bill Pigott, of the South Australian Institute of Technology, sets out a simple but very effective approach to this problem:

> Various factors or forces act on the problem situation. Some act as positive forces, or facilitating factors as far as the goal is concerned, and promote solutions. Others are negative and tend to be making the situation worse, inhibiting changes towards the more ideal state and thus are preventing the goal being reached.

Figure 21.


PROBLEM
Desired Alternative or Goal
• Things which promote solution
• Positive factors
• Facilitating forces
• Strengths
• Driving forces
+
• Things which make situation worse
• Negative factors
• Inhibiting forces
• Weaknesses
• Restraining forces
–

> The simple listing of all these factors (as they presently act on a situation) gives an overall view of the problem as it is. Any plans for action can then be related to the problem as a whole.
>
> This often enables seemingly hopeless problems to become potentially manageable. (Pigott 1979).

While it is not easily possible to improve the positive factors, the negative forces are responsive to efforts to overcome them. Thus it is feasible to attack the forces that are running against the realisation of the goals, reduce their ill-effects, and find an even more favourable solution than would otherwise be anticipated.

DAILY BULLETIN

Marion had a *daily bulletin* sheet. Theoretically anybody with a school message could use the sheet, and most teachers and many students did use it at some time or other. We distinguished those messages meant for teachers, for all students, or for a particular group, and we reduced the number of messages which were irrelevant to any one individual. Certainly those teachers who sorted out the relevant ones for their group, and gave them emphasis, served their colleagues best. Usually these teachers were those who had messages to give out themselves! They appreciated the problem. We moved the time for messages on to the 10.30 - 11.30 a.m. period of the day, because we found everybody was more responsive at that hour.

Occasionally we had a disciplinary session about the use of the bulletin—it helped a bit—we could not do without the bulletin but we were never able to reach a high level of efficiency. Various 'hurt' people had a 'beef' about their frustration. The 'beef' at least relieved the feelings. A complex, lively place, there was always lots to communicate at Marion. So we were pushed into the necessity of having compulsory sessions for reading the bulletin each day, knowing that alternative methods of contact were even more difficult. We had stopped using the public address system because it was a considerable irritant (and interruption) to teachers and students who were the people whose co-operation was necessary if proper communication was to occur. But we did highlight priority matters of general application from time to time—the staff were called together to be *briefed immediately before the action* e.g. at recess break, just prior to homestead meetings. That arrangement was both appreciated and effective. (I believe that the response suggests that most lapses did not come through ill-will.)

I found I could communicate better with *individual teachers or small groups* if I went to the area in which they usually worked. My office was not used very often for reproof, but that association often created a barrier which should not have been present. On occasion, unexpected calls upon time, would make me late for the appointment. If I sought out the teachers, they were less inconvenienced. Unfortunately this arrangement was not always possible, but each day I 'delivered' my messages, and made many contacts away from my office. I tried to be available at breaks. I was conscious that time was precious to most of the staff, and that I should take that fact into account.

STAFF MEETINGS

General Staff Meetings should be looked upon as times for teachers to hear about the successes and challenges other teachers are enjoying, and to explore a general topic of professional development or a matter of student growth to which all of the teachers can address themselves. There are difficulties. While a few want prolonged debate, most are content to make their contribution or hear the views of others and contribute to the consultative process, which leads to consensus. By dividing into small meetings with the same agenda, more can participate and the tendency is reduced for faculties to enter into pitched battles and draw us away from the essentials. However, these general meetings did help reveal issues which could be taken up later.

Marion also had a number of standing committees. After the first two or three years, fewer meetings were necessary, but the pastoral care, special projects and curriculum committees continued to meet under a deputy principal as often as business required it. We came however to have numbers of ad hoc committees to deal with particular developments. The emphasis moved to homestead staff groups, faculty groups and meetings of the year or homestead co-ordinators. The latter may have no brief to report to the principal, or to the general staff meeting, except when the decisions affect other areas or a sharp change in policy is contemplated.

The principal's task becomes more one of co-ordination and of ensuring that decisions fit within the parameters of the aims and objectives which have been set. Occasionally it will become necessary to do the unpopular thing and modify or even veto a decision which would lead to inconsistency in policies. But, I believe, that with explanation, most come to appreciate the need for this kind of moderation. Of course, some teachers will want to interpret the principal's action as evidence that their decision-making options are being usurped, but experience has taught me that the group who wants to go off on a tangent is rarely content with a majority consensus. Of course, policy must be modified, and Marion often benefited from the restlessness of small minorities, either as advocates of sharp change or of deepening conservatism. I am now convinced that the difficult task of keeping a philosophy true in its interpretation, and implementation is an essential leadership role that only the principal can exercise. It is one which must be exercised or growth soon becomes stifled.

'MOVING INTO THE FUTURE'

To help preserve a common direction, a working document called 'Moving into the Future' was prepared, published by the school and a copy made available to every teacher at Marion. Five editions were needed during my ten years, and the sixth edition was in process at the time I left the school. Each emerged out of the one before it. It described the philosophy of the school, its aims and objectives and gave general information about broad policies, organisation, and programmes. It was never meant to be a detailed management manual—in fact it was deliberately not a teacher's handbook. But in most areas, a teacher could discover the broad principles by which we worked: it helped newcomers, but it did not provide ready made answers about the modus operandi of the school. Each edition took up new programmes, omitted matters no longer relevant, and included any amendments to old programmes still in use.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

The main avenue of communication with students was through the homestead staff. The daily bulletin contained messages for students and these were made known to students during the homestead period each day.

The front counter staff were expected to answer queries.

Subject prospectuses gave information about curricular matters.

The student services areas (learning centres, special rooms, homesteads) gave information and help on request.

At assemblies important plans were advertised, events reported upon and through the presentation of awards and homestead programmes students were kept aware of the wide range of opportunities available to them. In this way we tried to encourage them to become active participants.

The ability displayed by students, chosen at random, to conduct visitors about the school, and give accurate information, was often commended. In this service to the school, they displayed its curriculum, its atmosphere and the richness of the relationships which existed between people on all levels.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

This takes on very important proportions these days, because more and more parents want to use greater and greater powers to decide the kind of education their children should have.

While I do not dispute the rights of parents to decide about their children's education, many parents support the traditional approach because it is the only one with which they can identify. Unfortunately, in the classrooms they knew, the teachers' methods were essentially passive, the attitudes most influential upon their children's self-concepts were negative, and the views most often voiced wanted the curriculum to be confined to visible prestigious skills. The situation is not helped by the fact that most parents attended high school during the very difficult post-world-war two years. During that period, a lack of trained teachers often meant poor teaching in many classrooms but, because they were also days of full employment, those schooldays have now come to represent, in many people's minds, the epitome of all that is effective in education.

It is essential now that parents

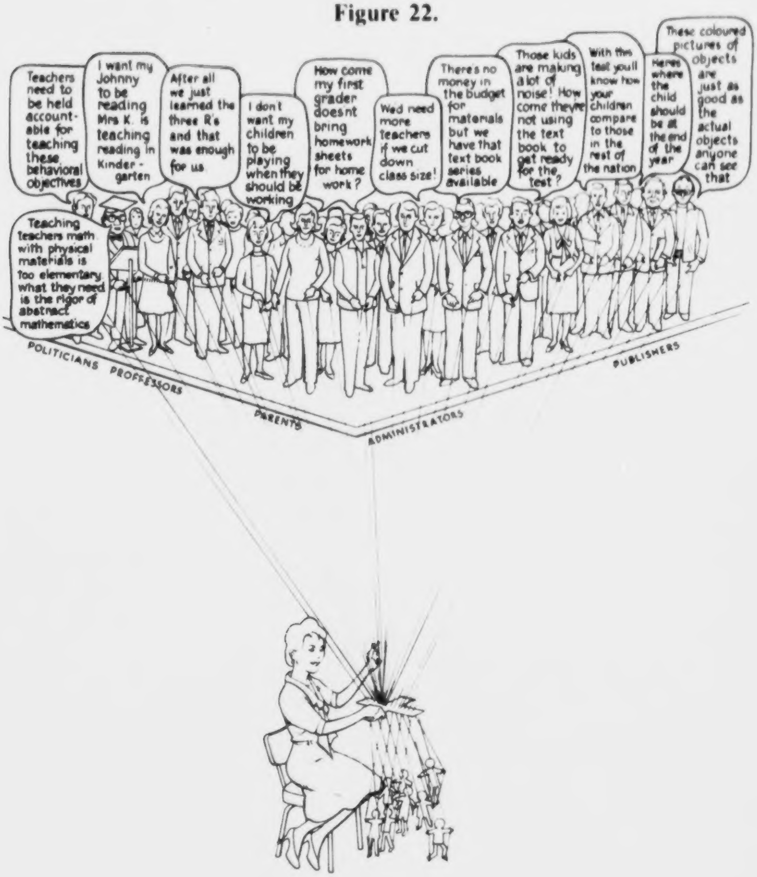
> if not educated, [are] at least informed and even instructed about better education that their children should receive . . . (Piaget, 1970, p.83)

in the hope that they will help schools to make the changes required for the benefit of their children. So long as the parents remain convinced about the rightness of traditional classroom patterns, a class of thirty, unmotivated, bored, conforming, rebellious students are unlikely to respond to the teacher's efforts to encourage curiosity, inquiry and spontaneous discovery. Stimulating teachers will encounter resistance from those who want stuffy orchestrated syllabuses or have an ability to transfer blame for their children's failures to the more adventurous teachers or to the principal of the school (as the responsible disciplinarian in the worst sense of that term).

> Children and education remain the scapegoats of the political system . . . When the government or society gets sick, children take the medicine . . . (Elkind, 1976, p.247)

and teachers are required to administer it. Elkind believes that this kind of exploitation of children is the principal block to making schools more student-centred. As the cartoon suggests, teachers are manipulated to use 'remedies', which suit a range of political and social ends.

Figure 22.


Teachers need to be held accountable for teaching these behavioral objectives
I want my Johnny to be reading Mrs K. is teaching reading in Kindergarten
After all we just learned the three R's and that was enough for us
I don't want my children to be playing when they should be working
How come my first grader doesn't bring homework sheets for home work?
Wed need more teachers if we cut down class size!
There's no money in the budget for materials but we have that text book series available
Those kids are making a lot of noise! How come they're not using the text book to get ready for the test?
With this test you'll know how your children compare to those in the rest of the nation
Here's where the child should be at the end of the year
These coloured pictures of objects are just as good as the actual objects anyone can see that
Teaching teachers math with physical materials is too elementary what they need is the rigor of abstract mathematics
POLITICIANS
PROFFESSORS
PARENTS
ADMINISTRATORS
PUBLISHERS

(Labinowicz, 1980, p. 272)

Piaget saw these old educational conceptions as stifling teachers into being less than professional. The difficulty one experiences in getting teachers to adopt methods which have been shown to be many times superior to some of the old methods seems to support his view. Hence the necessity for the 'alive' schools to communicate with the parents—in their language, the general alternative pattern and the demonstrable, more desirable outcomes.

The principal must delegate some of the responsibility to the teachers who can play a part which has paramount importance. The risks are higher—sooner or later a trusted teacher will tell a parent something that contradicts the principal's input—yet the risk must be taken for the prize is considerable. At Marion we used several other devices:

- The speech night visual presentation was designed to show the students actively at work, and to help the members of the audience understand what we were doing.
- The paper *Community News* included pictures and statements about student achievement and how the students came to be good achievers. The paper was, and is, produced by students.
- A newsletter, issued to parents every two to four weeks (now issued weekly) emphasised information about forthcoming events. It also helped form a picture of the school's programme by recognising student achievements.
- The coffee nights were occasions on which the parents of a small group of students at the same stage were invited to ask questions and have them answered, to see the facilities and to experience the environment in which their children worked.
- A night meeting for parents of new students followed an individually conducted tour of the school.
- The open nights enabled parents to review the progress of their children with teachers.
- The reports were worded carefully to enable parents to identify with their children's successes and to note the positive steps that could be taken by both parties to improve the learning and the school experience of the children.
- The open policy increased the number of parents who came on-site to talk to teachers, and to see the school in action.
- One year we attempted to interest parents in each part of the curriculum through a series of illustrated talks which were presented by the staff of each faculty. Although they asked for it, few came. However, teachers did benefit from the chance to describe their 'wares' in a form that lay-people could understand.
- Many teachers used opportunities to contact parents about matters which pleased them, as well as difficulties which might have arisen.
- The large contingent of volunteers, many helping in classrooms, learnt about the school and became helpful agents among other parents.
- The students were 'taught' the goals, and they could, and often did, advocate the methods the school employed. Extra enrolments into the upper school provided the hard evidence that they were happier and more successful than they had been previously.
- Whenever a parent visited the school, time was taken to explain our actions, the reasons for our decisions, and the manner of our approaches.
- The women's auxiliary, the ethnic advisory council and the high school council all had roles as interpreters of the work done in the school and as purveyors of information about the school.

Without this active programme of 'communication with parents', the learning levels could not have been raised as much as they were. But the matter did not stop there. In most of the situations described, there is opportunity for the parent to communicate with the school. As good listeners, we could monitor our progress and make any modifications which appeared to be desirable. Numbers of actions gained their motivation from the constructive suggestion of a parent. In this atmosphere 'complaints' became few in number and conversations were often encouraging and affirming.

REPORTS ON STUDENTS

Brief reference has already been made to the importance of good reporting to students and parents, to profiling (development of a profile of a student's achievements during his secondary school career) and to other avenues of communication with parents about their children (open nights, coffee nights, and so on).

The school report needs special attention because

- it is an important authoritative official document, and
- every year, teachers give many thousands of hours to the preparation of reports.

Yet, commonly, there is little useful parental response to comments teachers make because the forms of wording that are used do not encourage them or their children to take special note nor do they indicate how the students might change their behaviour to obtain better outcomes.

I think we discovered that statements which were judgemental or labelling, reduced the chance of parental support, when really it was their help that we were seeking. Perhaps two-way communication and helpful responses are stopped by the hidden messages which parents detect, or imagine they hear behind the wrong kind of messages. Behind 'John could do better. He is too talkative and often lazy', the parents detect what are to them more significant messages like:

> 'That teacher does not like my child (me)'.
> 'My child is unlucky to have you as a teacher'.
> 'You don't know my child'.
> 'It is you, not Susie or Johnny who needs to change'.

So the intention of all that effort comes to nothing. Not only is the endeavour to help Susy and Johnny wasted, but the parent and child may have been alienated. Maybe the teachers have released a little frustration but, in the process they have increased the chances of more frustration in the weeks that follow!

When we altered the form of the wording, the change was dramatic. For one thing we received many similarly helpful and encouraging comments from parents—a marvellous bonus for the teachers. There was also evidence that students were trying to correct their deficiencies and that parents were encouraging their children to do as their teachers had suggested. Above all, students were responding to the encouragement they had received through comments in their reports—they felt they could improve, so they did the things needed to bring about better performances.

We eliminated 'you' messages, and substituted 'I' messages, because the former create resentment and get in the way of the message itself. The 'I' messages had three components: they were non-judgemental, descriptive, and teacher's feelings were allowed to intrude. The description was specific about what was approved or disapproved. When disapproval was expressed, at best, the message indicated the capability of the student to achieve improvement (e.g. rather than 'Sue must work harder if she is to succeed', a teacher might write 'I wonder if Sue is spending enough time on her study, or if she is, whether she is concentrating and making sure she has memorised the essential facts, *before* she attempts the exercises'; or 'Tom's work is satisfactory, but he could do more homework', might be replaced by, 'I have been very pleased to note the high quality of Tom's work after he has prepared himself well before the lesson').

FINAL COMMENT

I do not believe that I ever mastered the art of good communication. The busy day left many messages lost or partly lost because of some simple deficiency on my part. Sometimes my 'body language' supported a kindly intention or gave the impression that I was prepared to listen to somebody keen to pass something on to me. Sometimes a general statement or a word misused or given an emphasis I had not intended, sounded unfair to those who merited a different message. At other times I shared healthy constructive dialogue with the school community. What I did establish was that the time spent trying to communicate well was more than repaid.

* * *

THE ESSENCE OF LIFE

When I was a very young girl
I dreamed of a land of paradise.
Now that I'm older, and I've
Thought about it—I realise . . .

It wasn't so good
After all
It was a land of plenty
But plenty was wrong with it also.

CHORUS:
It had a mystical feeling—
An atmosphere.
All of a sudden:
Everything became quite clear . . .
"Take me away!" I screamed,
My voice like a slicing knife:
"There is no love here"
And love is the Essence of Life.

The land had a lot of water,
Big strong trees,
Beautiful flowers
And a cool, steady breeze;

And yet—something was wrong here.
Something not right,
As I lay there, dreaming
In the middle of the night.

CHORUS (repeat)

. . . Helen Preece
Year 11

25

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The general attractiveness and functional sufficiency of the buildings and grounds of a school are two of the basic considerations which must be taken into account whenever a school programme is established. Both factors contribute to a good learning environment and both can have strong negative effects if they are inadequate.

Our older schools have tended to be made up of bare buildings, without verandahs, with drab 'serviceable' paint colours, standing in a sea of black asphalt. The parade ground mentality has stayed with us long after the 'Friday Marching' sessions have departed. Our literature refers to shelter from rain, when shelter from the sun has been a far more significant factor. Since Marion was established in this tradition, it was essential that the empty paved areas should be modified to include trees, lawns, gardens and an occasional sculpture. The school had already landscaped the area near the new hall and front entrance, and trees, dating back to the time when the school was first opened, were well established around the perimeter. An extensive grassed sports area occupied about 3 hectares.

The process became one of extending the existing green areas throughout the campus. The resultant softening effect made a significant change to the learning environment and transformed the grounds of the school into a practical laboratory which staff were encouraged to include among their resources, either as a source of data or as a place where skills could be practised. Though sluggishly developed in many ways, the overall contribution to the atmosphere of the school, was to add interest and to afford opportunities to steep youngsters informally in a range of valuable on-site 'real' examples which benefited the formal content of many subjects. A financial benefit (see chapter 28) also accrues as the efforts of students give more value to every dollar spent.

When we were unfortunate enough to lose a large building by fire, the area was rehabilitated by establishing an outdoor gymnasium. Largely built by students, a large concrete floor was flanked by rolling lawns on which a series of items of steel apparatus was installed and spread among trees—from a flying fox to simple balancing equipment and free standing walls against which students could improve their ball and racquet skills.

An attempt to 'lose' the buildings in greenery was largely thwarted by an Education Department painting policy which insisted upon very pale colours. Bare end walls of buildings were covered by large murals which added colour and interest. Some primary colour was allowed by the Education Department on the outside doors and inside the buildings, and some additional colour was added by including brightly coloured furniture and wall displays of student work, coloured posters, murals and pot plants.

As part of the homestead scheme, groups were expected to look after and improve their physical environment. Seed money (about $25 per homestead per year) was included in the annual budget. Most homesteads would regularly add to this amount and parent volunteers often worked with groups of students to improve their area, while many other parents contributed materials. Gardens were developed and murals and sculptures displayed. They have provided, and still provide, opportunities for students to learn bricklaying, concrete work and numbers of other skills not normally included in school courses yet commonly used at home. Besides making an attractive addition to the grounds, a sense of ownership grew among the students.

At a similar level, furniture was maintained and sometimes built. Students prepared a mezzanine floor for one of the classrooms as a construction exercise of practical value to those who were investigating better use of classroom space.

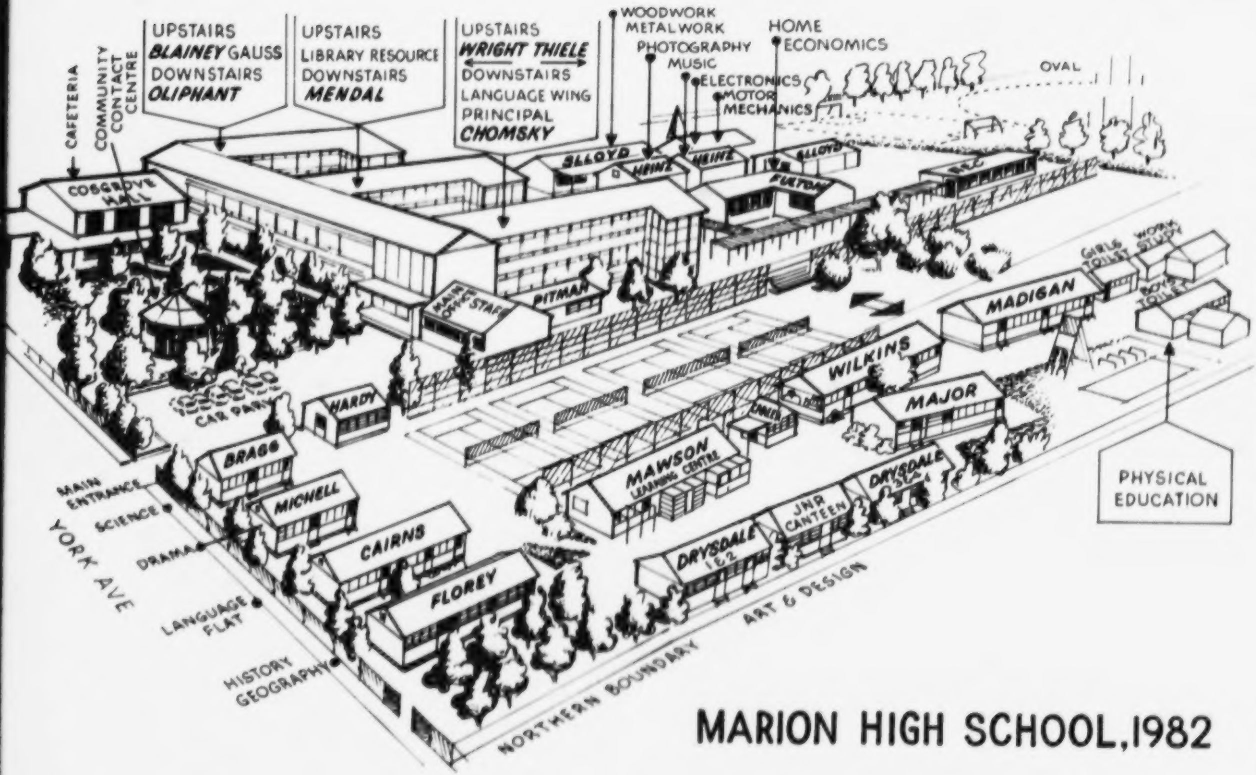
The staff response to all of this effort was mixed at the end of delivery. Busy teachers tended to place the possibility of a contribution low on their order of priorities, preferring to make spasmodic efforts. Hence it was necessary for the leadership to keep the matter alive without making a fetish of it. The outcome was a general genuine appreciation of the idea, and a willingness to arrange and maintain an attractive physical environment. As the years passed, however, students needed little reminding, and were usually ready to volunteer the effort needed for maintenance and improvements.

As the years went by Education Department and Public Buildings Department policies became less resistant to landscaping projects and, in recent years, Marion shared with other schools, in self-help schemes designed to improve school grounds. The response of the parents and the general public was unequivocally approving and supportive.

One quadrangle was devoted to an animal area where Australian animals and large birds were allowed to wander among large aviaries for smaller birds, and cages for smaller animals. Students were allowed to enter the area at will, or observe the area through the windows which surrounded the area. The health and welfare of the animals were a constant interest for students who rated the area as the school's most treasured possession. Students were involved in the care of the animals in the area which also made a valuable resource for a range of biological studies. There was seldom a time during the day when the animal area did not have a large contingent of observers. Local kindergartens and families often brought small children to enjoy the grounds and include time with the animals.

Inside the Buildings

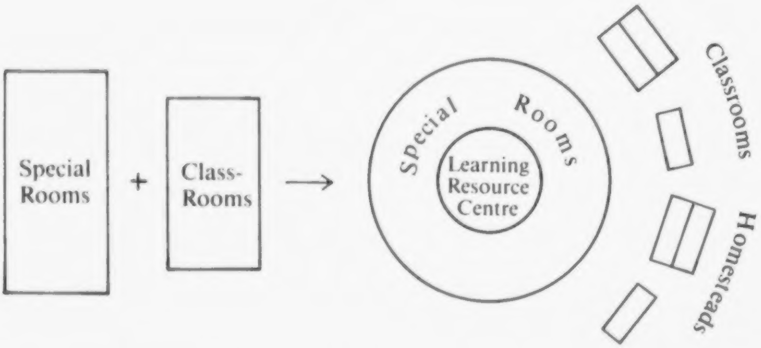
'Instructional change tends to be limited to what the existing facility can easily accommodate' and thought has to be given 'to suiting spatial usage to new instructional techniques'. (Unruh & Turner, 1970, p.176)


CAFETERIA
COMMUNITY CONTACT CENTRE
UPSTAIRS
BLAINEY GAUSS
DOWNSTAIRS
OLIPHANT
UPSTAIRS
LIBRARY RESOURCE
DOWNSTAIRS
MENDAL
UPSTAIRS
WRIGHT THIELE
DOWNSTAIRS
LANGUAGE WING
PRINCIPAL
CHOMSKY
WOODWORK
METALWORK
PHOTOGRAPHY
MUSIC
ELECTRONICS
MOTOR MECHANICS
HOME ECONOMICS
OVAL
COSGROVE HALL
LLOYD
HEINZ
HEINZ
LLOYD
FULTON
MAIN OFFICE STAFF
PITMAN
GIRLS TOILET
WORK STUDY
BOYS TOILET
MADIGAN
WILKINS
MAJOR
HARDY
CAR PARK
BRAGG
MICHELL
CAIRNS
FLOREY
MAWSON LEARNING CENTRE
DRYSDALE 1&2
JNR CANTEEN
DRYSDALE 3&4
PHYSICAL EDUCATION
MAIN ENTRANCE
SCIENCE
DRAMA
LANGUAGE FLAT
HISTORY GEOGRAPHY
YORK AVE
NORTHERN BOUNDARY
ART & DESIGN

MARION HIGH SCHOOL, 1982

At the time of revamping the school programme to include a social dimension and more subjects, the decision was taken to reduce the number of classrooms, by converting some of them to specialist rooms. At the same time, the range of student abilities demanded that we adopt more active teaching methods, and these needed larger spaces (more room per student). Hence we planned a complex of specialist rooms and classrooms which could double as homesteads.

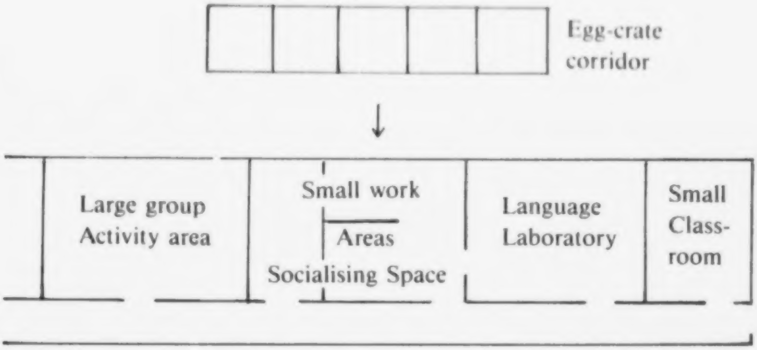
Figure 23.


Special Rooms
+
Class-Rooms
Special Rooms
Learning Resource Centre
Classrooms
Homesteads

As the idea of providing a learning support system developed first through the extension of the library to include audio-visual items, and then through a reading development unit, more classrooms were absorbed into specialised use.

Figure 24.

Multi-Cultural Centre


Egg-crate corridor
Large group Activity area
Small work
Areas
Socialising Space
Language Laboratory
Small Class-room

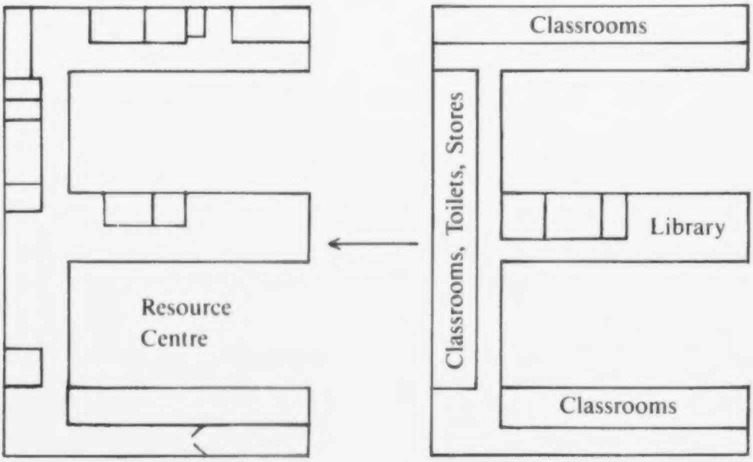
In this conceptual schemata, the learning centres and specialist rooms were central to the school, and they were surrounded by additional classrooms which alternated as homesteads, when the school was operating as a social unit.

To accommodate several new functions a workable set of spaces was achieved in spite of the obvious constraints to adapting a collection of more or less equal-sized rooms, haphazardly distributed over the campus.

One wing formerly with five standard classrooms, was modified for multicultural studies—a large general activity classroom, a language laboratory, a small classroom, and by making inside openings, a socialising cum drop-in centre could double as two teaching spaces for small group work. Still five spaces, but now of varying size to enable a range of activities to operate more comfortably (Figure 24).

The upper floor of the main building was extensively remodelled. The spine and centre wing of the E-shaped building were opened up to make an extensive library-resource centre. On one leg, the library opened into the history area, which in turn opened into the mathematics and computing rooms while the other arm became the English wing. Dividing the row of six classrooms in the middle made two effective homesteads.

Figure 25.

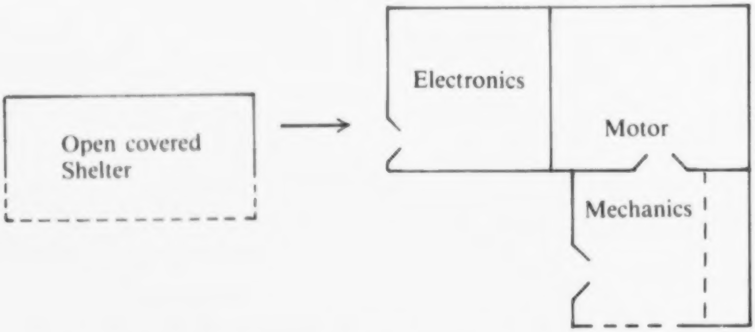


The part of the learning resource centre in which special group and individual help was offered, was set up in a wooden block, which had served as a staff room and science demonstration rooms. Several alterations to the inside walls enabled various withdrawal spaces, an open area and a hobby shop to develop.

Proper accommodation was needed for new subjects such as Australian history, food, metal and building technology and some of the performing arts. New methods of teaching the traditional subjects such as geography, mathematics and physical education also needed new special areas or modifications to their previous spaces. Classroom areas were made into specialist rooms, and existing workshops were adapted for new equipment and new procedures. In one area, for example, students were involved in preparing a 'living area' to help foreign language studies. In this case, senior language students showed us how they could learn a language more quickly when they were surrounded by the objects included in the conversation pieces they were practising.

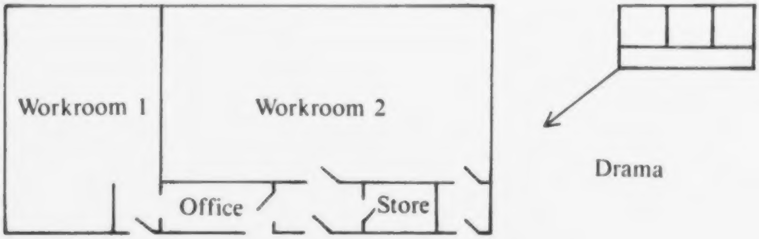
In another part of the school, a small grant enabled a shelter shed to be partitioned and wired for electric power, before teachers and groups of students set up electronics and motor mechanics workshops.

Figure 26.



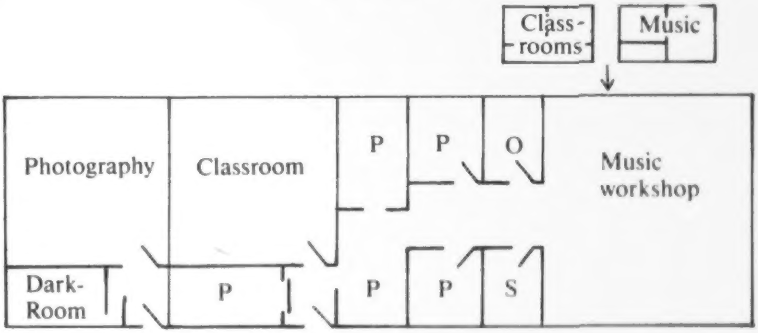
One triple wooden block was cleared of some of its inside partitions to make two drama workshop areas, and staff office accommodation, while three classrooms in the solid construction building were converted to a geography teaching area, which consisted of two workshops, with a spill area between.

Figure 27.



One room and the adjacent passage became a photography workshop, while the adjoining classroom was incorporated with the music facility nearby so that a continuous set of rehearsal and practice rooms could be created.

Figure 28.



P = Practice Room
S = Store Room
O = Office

The plastics workshop was extended to provide storage space, and more workspace for students. Removal of part of the dividing wall enabled the students to have access to the larger workshop alongside.

As part of the transition to a comprehensive school the Education Department had increased the craft facilities by building a multipurpose workshop with wood, metal, plastic, welding and painting facilities and a classroom. As part of the same project, the food studies area had also been extended to provide an additional 'kitchen', suitable for 20 students at one time. Later we modified one kitchen so that a refrigerator room and macro-equipment could be included, to cope with food preparation and catering needs.

Another wooden building, formerly four standard classrooms, and a corridor was converted to accommodate business studies. A larger 'machine' room (double size) was made by removing a partition, and, by dividing the corridor, staff offices and smaller rooms for group and individual activity were created.

The art rooms were modified so that they could be entered from the school side of the buildings, thus enabling the corridor area to become office/storeroom and kiln space. In this way the work areas became more integrated into the whole and the isolated buildings of the department gained in cohesion.

Two small shelter sheds were also brought into regular use—one was joined to a large shed, and then further extended to form a 'factory' for the 'production' students in the study-work programme. The second shelter made an excellent staff area for the sport and physical education teachers, a store and a much improved change-room/toilet complex.

Inside the large two storied E-shaped building, an unused cloak-room had been converted to office space, and two small classrooms into a bookroom/office. Later, the administrative areas were modified in a variety of ways to accommodate the larger volume of work.

In 1974 the school held a largish sum of money in various accounts related to projects which, for one reason or another, had not been carried out. We devoted much of that money to carpeting floors and providing other improvements which reduced the noise level and lifted their appearance.

Before a section of building could accommodate a homestead group of 40 - 90 students (see chapter 6), the original classroom block had to be adapted for a range of extra functions. Isolated blocks of wooden classrooms were altered to include 'home' space for storing personal belongings, a store/office space for the staff associated with the homestead, two single classrooms and area larger than a single classroom for group work and other activity type learning. The latter space could second when it was not needed for study sessions, as a place in which students could socialise (eat, meet, celebrate or set up social activities like table-tennis).

The work and costs of converting the buildings and providing the furniture, fittings and major items of equipment was shared by the Public Buildings Department, the Education Department, The Australian Schools Commission and the school.

THE ARITHMETIC

All of this was possible while numbers declined and a population of up to 1000 was contemplated. With the success of the school, the numbers have increased, and a severe strain on the accommodation is now being experienced. During the decade under review, two drama rooms and an art room were lost through fire and two transportable classrooms were moved away.

At its peak of enrolments, the accommodation was similarly overloaded so that the school was still well filled in 1974 with 1530 students. It is not unreasonable to round off the figures and compare the building space required by the reduced student population as we anticipated it for 1983 with what was thought to be sufficient ten years earlier. Our equation was that the building needs in 1974 for 1450 students equals the needs in 1983 for 1000 students.

There are several reasons for the increase in the mean space needed for each student. I have already described how a number of classrooms were converted into specialist (subject workshop and learning centre) accommodation. In addition,

- The number of students in the upper two years has not changed significantly:

Table 23

	1974	1983
Year 12	220	254
Year 11/12	533	476

- The school now has a larger proportion of its students in the senior school:

Table 24

	1974	1983	Difference
Year 12	14%	23%	9%
Year 11, 12	35%	43%	8%
Year 10, 11, 12	59%	62%	3%

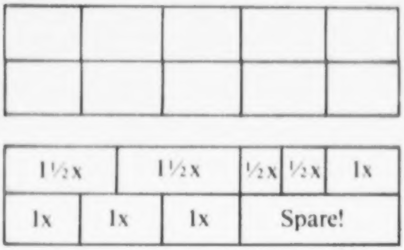
The senior school is now commonly regarded as those years which include students over *fourteen* years of age (year 10 and upwards). These students need round 25% more space each, (Coventry Consultative Document, 1982, p.51) compared with years 8 and 9 students.

- The senior school enrolment in 1983 included around 70 adults and part-time students. Both groups are regarded as round 20% less space efficient than school-age students (Coventry, p.57)

During the period of this transition the number of teachers has only marginally decreased (from 96 to 89). With teacher-class loads unchanged, there has been little change in the number of classes operating at any one time. When we include the learning resource centre, the space occupied at any one time has actually increased. So it should not be surprising that rooms were at a premium with 1130 students on the roll in 1984.

On these bases, it will only be possible, in the future, to conserve floor area and related cleaning and maintenance costs by including more smaller classrooms in the overall plan. To take a single example: given 10 standard classrooms and a reduction of say 50% in population with a normal distribution, only 8 rooms, including two larger (one and a half size) spaces will be needed. If 2 small spaces (half size) are included then a 20% reduction in space can be accomplished.

Figure 29.



(10 rooms x 30 students each)
= 300 students

8 spaces x 10 to 30 students each
= 150 students

However, if the case to include some additional social space is accepted, significant amounts of spare space are unlikely.

To return to the Marion example, in the process of conversion, there have been nine alterations involving increase in the size of each area. Only two smaller rooms have been produced. To achieve this result two large unused shelters had to be converted to workshops. In effect the useful floor space for 1000 students is approximately equal to that needed by the normal distribution of the 1450 students who undertook the narrower academic programme in 1974. Hence, as the school population rises again toward 1200, space problems are certain to occur.

Although these arguments were put to the authorities from time to time, they were generally not supported and it was suggested more than once that if these be the facts then we should not enrol students in the upper school. If the comment was made seriously, then it surely suggests that the thinking was antiquated because the pressures to educate all students of senior age has already received world-wide acceptance. On another note the school did benefit through the willingness of the Education Department to convert existing space for school and community use.

However it is interesting to compare the number of rooms in the school as it is presently constituted with the standards established by the Education Department in South Australia in 1983. ('The Determination of School Building Capacity', September, 1983). According to this document, Marion's entitlement based on an enrolment of 1000, would be 60 spaces, of which 18 would be only large enough for small groups. This represents an oversupply of 9 rooms. When the additional spaces are added in terms of the unusual numbers in the upper school and the additional specialisation that represents, 9 more rooms are justified—the figure arrived at by the school and proved by experience. When the enrolment rises to 1200 the report recommends 69 rooms, which anticipates the problems that the school has been experiencing. However, in a final section of the report about future trends, several factors are mentioned, but the issues which relate to a higher proportion of senior students are not included. The reasons for this may have reflected an expectation that numbers of senior students would move into technical and further education courses before they had completed their high school education. Contrary to world trends, lower space needs were claimed as a result of dispersing some school functions to other institutions.

What of the Future?

If present trends continue, then we should see:

- an overall proportionate drop in lower school population
- a higher retention in the upper school
- an increase in the number of adult and part-time students
- an increase in the use of learning centres
- an increasing demand for social space
- a decrease in the time students spend in the normal classroom situation
- an increase in day-time occupation by community groups.

Overall it appears that most schools will require considerable adjustments to the positioning of their internal walls and most or all of their available space.

MARION HIGH SCHOOL RE-BUILT?

On several occasions, when the adaption of Marion High School to its present pattern of use of its buildings has been discussed, I have been asked whether the same objectives could have been achieved if the scatter of buildings were replaced by a new complex.

If present specifications apply, this would be difficult because these new buildings lack space for socialising and would not readily adapt for homestead use. Nor would a sufficient number of specialist rooms have been provided.

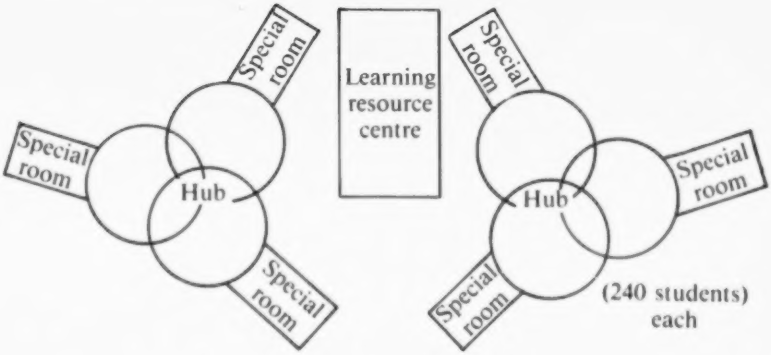
I see two possible solutions.

Some new schools include buildings which the planners say will revert to housing and other community use when the school population decreases. These 'homes' make admirable 'homesteads'. If my argument is correct, and assuming that the new school includes many of the specialist areas Marion had to create, it is likely that several of these homes would be needed by the school of the future. Hence social space could be provided, in part, in the same way as at Marion.

In a simpler way some school designs have been developed with this principle in mind:

- The small school structure used in Sweden puts youngsters into separate sections with a central home entrance foyer to each 'social 'section.
- The design used in recent schools for disadvantaged youngsters is conceived in this way—a large common room/activity area opens into two or three specialist rooms.
- The specialist blocks built in secondary schools in Western Australia have a central resource area opening into a set of four rooms, equipped for the particular faculty they serve. However, the design is teacher-oriented and meant to serve the needs of a subject. It would be a small step to create a social area as an additional part of the function of each building.

Figure 30.


Special room
Learning resource centre
Special room
Special room
Hub
Special room
Hub
Special room
Special room
Special room
(240 students) each

It appears to me that the school planners of the future should respond to modern research and include social space in their basic plans. It would then be desirable to provide such a space for each 80 students and the *core* of a school would be made up of these social (home) units. Diagramatically, the parts would be rearranged with the social groups at the hub of say three of these units with the subject specialist rooms and learning centres around the periphery. See Figure 30.

Such a model takes account of several weaknesses in designs of community schools which were built with the design assumption that the secondary school was a separate entity sharing facilities with community groups. The community centre of the future is not likely to make that kind of distinction, but will be for students from 12 to 100 years of age. The buildings should reflect the variety of uses to which they will be put.

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REVIEW AND TEACHER GROWTH

A danger for any school is that it will develop towards a set of ends as though it had a plan which will be satisfactory for ever. Inevitably that school slides onto a down path because like all human endeavours, there is growth or decline and never a happy state of static satisfaction.

Systems tend to remedy that situation by changing the leader who, immediately upon appointment, turns everything upside down. A whole disturbing process is entered upon which, after it settles, may not represent any real change at all. If that process occurs frequently (more often than every 7 years or more) the staff, even though it may change along the way, will harden against any kind of modification.

Stirrings of this kind usually do not seem to change very much in a school at the student level. Structures and routines will surely be altered but so often the sum total of the changes is not significant. One of the messages of this book is that the school must be student-centred. The student body will be in constant flux, so one outcome of the focus upon students would be that it could never be static. The picture of a school as a cauldron, continually on the boil, is a valid one. The bubbles will rise at different points, as needs move from one group to another.

Schools tend to review their general routine procedures more often than reviewing what actually happens in the classroom. The *routines should only exist to support teaching and learning*. Every aspect should be scrutinised and every member of the school must be a participant in the processes of review.

Students and parents, as well as teachers, must believe that it is worth their while to make a criticism or a suggestion. They may only be able to focus upon a specific area or make sweeping statements which reveal their limitations. From their more detached vantage points, instead of being expected to be fully informed and able to provide solutions, they may suggest revolutionary ideas which should not be put aside until they have been thoroughly tested by the professional staff.

There will be comfortable bits and some uncomfortable bits. Old, favourite ideas will sometimes be challenged and tried methods may no longer be as effective as the educators may hope. New problems which call for new solutions may arise and, maybe, the philosophical base of the school may need some modification. For example, problems may arise when teachers identify subgroups who can only work effectively at different levels.

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No school can ever be as good as it has a potential to be, but healthy discontent is as necessary to the life of a school as food is to the life of a human being. On the other hand, teachers should not feel discouraged by the discovery that there is still much to be achieved.

At Marion we used several strategies to achieve constant review and make everybody feel a part-owner of the whole enterprise:

- We were constantly 'listening' for needs.
- We spent time each year (usually twice) 'polishing up' our routines, to ensure that they kept pace with new emphases.
- Every second year, we questioned our curriculum in the light of social commentaries of the period, educational debate, research findings and our stated aims and objectives.
- Regularly at staff meetings and at the annual conference, methodology in the classroom was questioned, and remedies or alternatives found to correct perceived weaknesses.
- We gave constant attention to matters concerning the atmosphere of the school—communication, care, relationships. The ripple effects of any new enterprise were sensitively examined and adjustments were made whenever it seemed to be appropriate.
- Persons in promotion or leadership positions were expected to highlight strengths and to work at weak spots.
- Any complaints or suggestions were examined for themselves, and looked at to see whether they had a wider significance.
- Adolescence brings new attitudes and expectations which the school should accommodate. Hence, students, who were never locked into a course by the school, could make changes which reflected a new situation or interest.
- Each year a team of teachers travelled interstate to examine one or more matters which were at issue at our school.
- System advisers were drawn in to help us improve our performance.
- We maintained constant efforts to help teachers improve their performance and scholarship.

As the school's most costly and most valuable resource, its teaching force becomes the principal's special concern. Their huge potential must be brought into service by providing them with opportunities to use their knowledge and skills, and develop their expertise for the best advantage.

The number of outstanding teachers will be small; some will be more competent or more energetic than others. The qualities of outstanding teachers are so diverse as to make the best attributes elusive and so complex that they require each professional teacher to be involved in a search for growth which is never completed. It is kept alive by the intrinsic rewards which accompany their efforts.

Making Full Use of Teacher Resources

We must do more than account for the competencies of each teacher as part of the organisation. The more difficult, and neglected areas, concern the relationships of teachers with other people in the school—parents, students, and other teachers (including those in promotion positions), and the ways they feel about the school's programme in the broadest sense. All teachers have a unique contribution, of vital importance to them, to make to the quality of that programme. If the teachers feel good about the school and believe they 'own' some part of its enterprise, they are more likely to commit themselves and make their own special gifts available to it.

The number of principals who imagine that they have all of the wisdom in a school are few and foolish, yet sometimes part of the staff resource will not be used for reasons that have little to do with the leadership or management of the school. For example, a faculty leader may be so rigid and overbearing that the teachers withhold a number of valuable ideas that they could contribute. Given space to incorporate their own experience, they are more likely to work at adapting their competencies to the needs of their classes.

The wise leader makes a clear distinction between the good sense of unilateral decisions about administrative trivia (e.g. the date of the sports carnival; the way to report damage to property) and educational issues which benefit from the resources of each member or the distilled wisdom of the whole group.

The processes of consultation and consensus can be time consuming and leaders may sometimes have a difficult task in deciding when to draw the threads together, and seek a workable agreement. Dominant voices and capable persuaders must be moderated to allow the views of the small voices to have the prominence they deserve. Sometimes the ad hoc committee can get things going, but reliance on their recommendations, as a fait accompli, can be at the expense of significant input from others. Majority votes seldom resolve issues of importance. Group techniques can be useful, if, in reporting, all of the firmly held views are expressed and ideas are not dropped because they seem to be out on a limb at the beginning. Most views can usually be knitted into the consensus, or deliberately withdrawn by whoever put them forward.

When implementation begins, the process must not be allowed to stop as experiences provide a set of checks and stimulate alternatives. The initial action time may lead a teacher to want to regress to old ground, because of some setback. It is not until this stage has been reached that some teachers are able to contribute because they lack relevant experience and/or sufficient imagination to establish contact with the problem. There will be others who leave it until this time to enter the discussions because it is not until they are actually required to participate that they realise how the project affects them personally.

One strategy which is used commonly, seeks to gain a decision by asking the group to agree to try something for a fairly brief set period. This approach often encourages 'the enemy', working with the surety that the whole matter will be re-opened, subsequently to sabotage the outcome. Methods which set out to allow early experiences to amend and modify the general plan, are usually more effective and more prone to bring about constructive review.

A student-centred school is always a staff-centred school, but the reverse is not always true. The tragedy of many schools I have visited around the world is that principals have been led to believe that making the staff comfortable is a first exclusive goal. It is not so. These schools are usually unhappy places because staff are aware, in spite of their actions, that they do not act for the benefit of their students. It may be true that the table tennis table in the staff room is well used. There may be happy camaraderie among the teachers, but what appears to be good fellowship may have been motivated by an attempt to compensate for low professional morale.

The belief that something has to be done because 'the staff like it' might not be healthy, and needs to be viewed with caution unless it reflects satisfaction from better performances of the broad band of students. For example, when some students are troublesome, the aim *must be* to find ways to accommodate those students as effective learners and not to eliminate them for the sake of teacher comfort.

At Marion we tried to maintain a steady momentum toward changes which promised to improve the lot of the students. The empirical evidence was strong that, in an atmosphere of continuous and open review, teachers generally improved their ability to communicate with each other about their pedagogy, to identify and address problems as they arose, and to accept new ideas and solutions. These factors interacted through the processes of review and consensus decision-making. The diagram summarises the likely outcomes of the review processes by which a school responds to various suggestions about ways to keep continuous educational improvement.

Figure 31.

INPUTS — PROCESSES — OUTPUTS

Staff review → → better communications
of review
New information → and → clarified goals
decision
Communication → about → new goals
organisation,
Identified problems → administration → solved problems
and
New ideas → professional → improved procedures
development
Current organisation → → efficient organisation

Processes of Review, Organisation, Administration, and Professional Development

External Influences on Staff Quality

It is not useful in this book to discuss teacher training except to comment that teachers seldom seem to emerge from their training with a view that their profession is concerned equally for the full range of students in schools. Perhaps they are still too much under the influence of their own education which is most likely to have been lecture-based. The training seems to assume that 'all youngsters are clever'.

Deprived of the power to hire and fire, the government schools are dependent on the ability of personnel officers to make the best appointments. While the locations alone make schools different, the system still works as though all the schools are the same, and not very different from the schools of thirty years ago. Neither assumption is, or should be, true.

Appointment of Staff

In recent years, lip-service has been given to the idea that schools should have differences in their philosophies and practices, and that both should reflect local needs and local character.

Yet Marion tried to express, for example, its belief in the rightness of a policy which aimed to encourage every student to stay on at school for five years, through methods which were and are activity-oriented. It emphasized and still endeavours to bring about success outcomes from studies which appropriately challenge each student.

Yet probably the most frustrating of all the things I undertook as principal was the task of having to 'orient' the majority of the teachers when they first came to the school. The first need of new appointees is to get to know their new school—to understand what it does and why it does the things it does do. Some will want to claim that this approach withdraws their rights of autonomy and professionalism. Many act as though they believe that the school and the students have to conform to them. Certainly change is difficult but for some the challenge to their philosophical stand-point can be traumatic.

It follows that greater effort should be made to match the teacher to the school, and for the school leadership to become involved in the process of making appointments to the school. Evidence that I have gathered in countries that follow this practice suggests that teachers gain a sense of loyalty to their school out of the knowledge that a decision to employ them was made *in* the school that they have joined. That feeling of loyalty encourages the kinds of adjustment which inevitably accompany any change of job. But if all of this effort fails and a teacher cannot enter the organic whole then that teacher should leave and try elsewhere.

On a few occasions Marion has been able to arrange various special appointments. From that vantage point it has been rewarding to help teachers establish themselves in their work, because they are ready to learn about and accept local requirements. With few exceptions these people soon become creative in their own right, and begin to make a unique and constructive contribution to the school.

When a bad appointment has been made, the school, the teacher and the students are all disadvantaged. Teachers who cannot or will not fit in with what the school is attempting to achieve, cannot be happy or effective in their work. Much effort must be given to trying to bring about an adjustment. One helpful strategy establishes a close enough liaison with other teachers to keep better models in their daily experience.

Sometimes teachers are not aware of their incompetence because philosophical 'blocks' and simple rationalisation have transferred the blame for the poor responses in their classrooms to the students, their colleagues and the school. Thus they have freed themselves of a responsibility which is rightly their own. Detailed assistance with their own preparation, to a point of rehearsal, so that alternative outcomes become likely, can, over time, build up confidence and lead to better teaching practices. However, little of value can be accomplished without their co-operation.

Given that the appointment of the teachers has been appropriate, it is still essential that they undertake a major developmental task which engages their own special interests, experience and talents. The growth in self-concept which results gives teachers a defence against the new pressures that they must face in today's schools and sufficient reason for teacher development becoming a primary responsibility of principals and a collegiate activity of the whole staff.

New Roles

Much is at stake. Using the nature of their own schooling, and their training, as the base, many teachers are ill-equipped for the task required of them in the schools of today and tomorrow. This is not to say that traditional skills are not still valid for what they sought to achieve, but in today's schools other approaches and methods are often more appropriate for *most* of the students in our schools for *much* of the time, and to *all* of the students for *some* of the time.

The comprehensive school must therefore be strongly student-centred, and ready to adopt new requirements. Old priorities may become blurred. Teachers must be ready to understand and adjust to the characteristic attitudes, life styles and expectations of the ethnic and various socio-economic groups (not just the middle-class groups) in their care, without judging any one of them to be superior or inferior to any other. For example, students from poor working-class homes are unlikely to respond to excessive pressure or bullying from a teacher. While their parents share high aspirations for the children, these bad experiences they had at school make them protective and sheltering when their youngsters are placed under what they believe to be unjust duress. In demonstrating that all learning is valuable to the learner teachers must put aside any biases they might have about the status of various academic and non-academic subjects and about occupations which do not require tertiary training.

Within the enrolment there will always be a mixture of backgrounds, interests, abilities and expectations, viewed both in a social and a curriculum context. Thus the staff of the best comprehensive schools will be made up of people with the skills, the knowledge and the desire to teach more than academic, conceptual and cognitive content to bright well-motivated youngsters.

The implications of decreasing enrolments must be understood. Teachers may be required to widen the scope of their work to include services previously supplied by specialists, to expect less assistance from ancillary staff, to teach subjects which are on the borderline of their expertise, and to adopt methods, such as the use of monitors and volunteers, to do some of the routine work. Teachers must work to conquer the prejudice that falling enrolments and shrinking service support is a symptom of decline in the quality of education. In our system, teachers must accept the decision forced on administrators that they can be given little relief from these new pressures. It is worth noting that in Canada, several reports about the implications of falling enrolments have been made, usually by widely representative committees. All have recommended reduced pupil/teacher ratios for up to five years beyond the point of the decrease, or until there is an upturn in enrolments. By and large these recommendations have been adopted by governments and school boards. They recognise an obligation to fulfil the reasonable expectations of students at the time they entered their schools.

We must also change our status-order for teachers (beginners and experienced teachers, seasoned leaders and new leaders, etc.) Who are the best professionals? I find few can refute the claim that they are the persons able to teach effectively the classes which require the greatest call upon their knowledge and test their ability. These students will not be the brightest and oldest students. Soaked in a false status game (become a senior so that you can teach the easy classes), many teachers look for trivial psychic rewards for their efforts, e.g. students who are loyal to them, the fluke high assessment, or the high response lesson that was enjoyed by the youngsters. Or, as a next priority, seek the status which more money brings.

If the move by teachers' organisations to have outstanding teachers equally rewarded, is to be turned to use, it will recognise progression from year 12 to year 8 and from the top class to the bottom-ability group. I have never known teaching at a higher level, than among those year 8 - 10 classes of a school (a Melbourne independent school with well over one hundred years of tradition) which promotes teachers to the lower secondary years.

Only a few years ago we could justify a choice between retention of traditional ways and response to new requirements. Schools thought of themselves in those terms. Some chose to retain traditional patterns. They neatly and wrongly saw themselves in a classical mode. Other schools responded to external and internal pressures to make changes. But most schools made little change to their basic views about students, or to the methods they used. The hope was that alterations to subjects and organisation would solve the problems.

That choice no longer exists. The extent of the structural changes to our society is such that new practices are as necessary as they are inevitable. Attention has already been given to new approaches to the use of buildings, alterations to old ones and designs for new ones, to factors which increase retention rates, modifications to the curriculum and the way it is presented, use of time and the structure of the timetable and the attitudes which favour the entry of the new clientele into the community of learners. Considerations about the implications of these factors are of a magnitude that severely tests the entire education system. The roles of principals, their relationships with system administrators and the ways funds, facilities and other resources are provided, all demand new measures.

But, among this cluster of new ways that have to be found to do things, 'the greatest change is likely to be required in the stance and the skills of the teacher'. For

> Increasingly in the future teachers will need skills to enable them:
> - to analyse and diagnose individual learning processes and design individual learning programmes;
> - to have command of a variety of learning techniques including distance learning, computer based learning, remedial and enrichment programmes;
> - to understand the working and opportunities of group dynamics in learning processes and to contribute as a member of a professional team to group aims;
> - to achieve this in mixed-age and multicultural learning situations . . .
>
> In essence, these are requirements of moving towards self-learning, self-esteem and the acceptance of education as a life-long process. Teachers will need . . . to become less like judges and more like learning counsellors and therapists. (Coventry Consultative Document, 1982, p.44)

Marion has been concerned about these matters for several years, and has been moving towards adopting them. There really is no option for the teachers. It is not hard to predict a difficult future for those teachers who are not prepared to learn new approaches, or who find it very hard to do so.

Pressure to adopt change

Walter Vivian, from Western Australia, writing in *Education News*, and quoted in A.C.E. News, argues

> that teaching is, by its nature, a stressful occupation but that wise administration, counselling and evaluation can bolster a teacher's resilience . . .
> There is evidence that failure to meet the challenge of stressful situations has a cumulative effect . . . so that instead of merely coping badly he or she becomes incapable of coping at all. (Vivian, 1983, p.5)

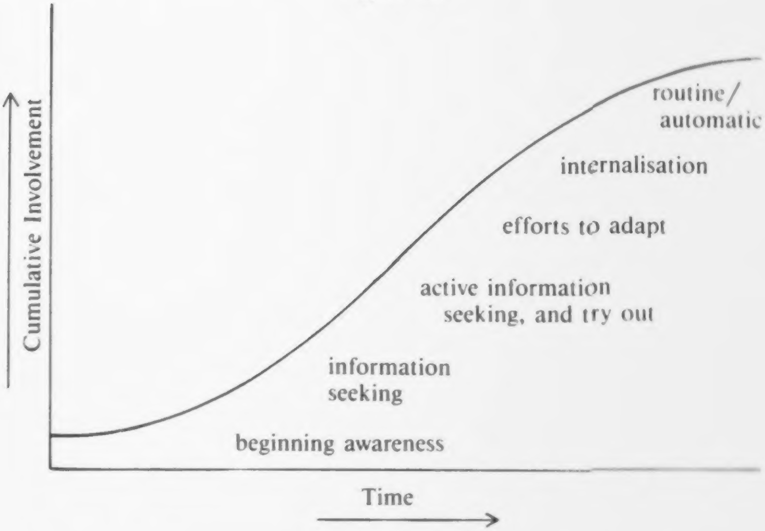
The factors which are conducive to successful implementation of innovation or change include:

1. Teachers favourably disposed towards change.
2. Teachers with a clear understanding of the innovation.
3. Innovation (that is) within teachers' capabilities.
4. Necessary resources for innovation are provided.
5. Necessary administrative/organisational arrangements are made.
6. Full accurate student diagnosis is carried out.
7. The channels of communication used for giving information, seeking co-operation, resolving fears, changing attitudes.

8 In-service education (being) available in connection with 2, 3, 6 and 7.
9 Adequate time is given to development of factors 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8. (Morrish, 1976, p.70)

Morrish rightly sees the achievement of change as cumulative. As we have already seen, most teachers will, eventually, adopt changes which have demonstrated their validity (see chapter 27). After a slow beginning while the teachers become aware of needs, change gathers momentum until the new processes have become part of their automatic response. (Morrish, p.74)

Figure 32.



Real, in-depth change in a school is unlikely to arise out of general conferences although some of these occasions can help a teacher to gain broad perspectives. When I reflect upon my experience as an agent of change I conclude that there is considerable merit in providing training within the school. While 'experts' from outside can be invaluable in many of the areas which need attention, it remains incumbent upon principals to organise and conduct a professional development programme in their schools. Certainly some aspects must be delegated to suitable members of the staff. Outside experts can help at the introductory planning and review stages. But the implementation phase is best regarded as an inside affair. This approach is most responsive to the itches and pinches which always become apparent as a new element of the school's programme is introduced and monitored. Teachers gain confidence out of the one to one contact which they can have with the principal, deputies, seniors and other colleagues who are involved. Throughout, modification, or even part or complete withdrawal, is possible and an atmosphere in which adaptations are acceptable can grow with the pride of ownership which is part of the success of any new programme.

Motivation may be stimulated by changes to structures. At Marion changes to the length of lessons (60 - 80 minutes) led teachers to try 'activity' methods which have much higher learning potential for the students. Communication skills have been assisted through the structure given to the homestead programme. Field education staff have given teachers confidence to use field study techniques. Teachers have received direct help, both through the strategies they can model and by a reduction in the pupil/teacher ratio for the study trip. Multicultural staff have shown teachers ways of helping English-second-language students with their English.

All of these aspects have been given serious support through

staff meetings of various kinds
interstate visits
on-going support
annual week-long planning and development conferences
the learning centre in the school
visitors
volunteers.

A new idea has little value unless the teacher has worked out how it can be used in his own work area. Interstate travel is available to four to six teachers each year. Each year, a sum of money is budgeted for this purpose. The travel group usually follows a theme as they visit a range of schools, live together, and seek a solution to a Marion problem. Some local projects are also funded by this means. The annual staff conference is held during the penultimate week of the year. The learning resource centre is a recent, very important avenue through which teachers could get help with new methods. All these measures are designed to help teachers. Most teachers have a complex class to 'manage', or they feel uncertain about their capacity to handle an approach with which they are not familiar.

The school has large numbers of visitors who help the staff to articulate the school's aims and objectives. The responses of visitors provide their own stimulus. A large body of volunteers add to the human resources which are available to both teachers and students. In this context any help given to students must make the teachers task more effective and vice versa.

Other Areas of Concern

HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS

Teacher training often lacks any real training in human relationships and pastoral care. Since feeling good about school is an essential pre-condition to learning, it is necessary to give time to teaching the techniques and skills and developing the attitudes needed to establish good relations with students. For a teacher 'to commit a wrong, to lower the dignity of a child and not be aware that the dignity has been impaired is much more serious' than errors in his work or errors left in a child's work. (Moustakis, 1966, p.35)

NEW TECHNOLOGY

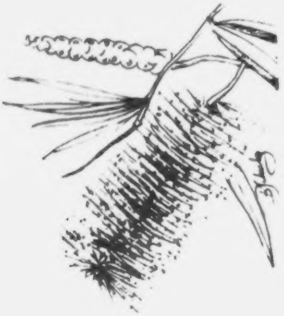
Modern technology is making new aids and materials available to teachers. Unless teachers have opportunities to master each aid, and appreciate the 'power of the tool', it is unlikely that they will incorporate it in their teaching and use it effectively. It may be necessary, over a long period, to provide expert help—the learning centre has field education expert teachers, computing experts, reading and diagnostic experts, counsellors, and so on to provide this ongoing readily available assistance.

SHARING WITH OTHER TEACHERS

Time and opportunity for teachers to see work done by their colleagues must be created. While the subject-orientations of teachers can be a barrier to many useful exchanges, teachers do tend to learn from other teachers more readily than from others. Hence there is value in teachers learning about the good things happening in their school, and having an opportunity to be affirmed by colleagues.

* * *

PRAISE FOR DEDICATED TEACHERS . . .



I have studied in Marion High School for nearly three years. The first time I had lots of problems because English is hard for me. In fact, it is a new language for everybody who has just come to Australia.

I tried hard to overcome this problem, and now, although I still do not understand much English, everything is getting more and more easy for me. In Year 11 the results I had was very good. That is because my teachers are very dedicated.

. . . Huong Phan
Year 11

27

THE ROLES OF THE PRINCIPAL

I have been indebted to many headmasters and principals for the inspiration and sustenance I have received since I became a principal back in 1960. Two of them made a special impact—Wybert Symonds at that time was President of the South Australian High School Principals' Association, and a strength in the founding days of that body, but I remember him particularly because of his frequent reminders that we were engaged in a noble task for the benefit of the students in our schools. It was his influence which gave me the courage to try to give a worthy place in my schools to all of the youngsters who were enrolled—in those days, that was against the mainstream of narrow high academic achievement as the one goal of a High School.

Later, Bernard Cosgrove, my predecessor at Marion High School, affirmed the importance of my position. He said, 'However effective committees might appear to be, and however democratic they might appear to be as governing instruments for the school community, if heads were abolished, then very soon they would have to be re-invented' in an address to Australian High School Principals' Association, Hobart, 1972. He was emphatic that the first priority for a school was 'an educational and cultural leader' and he quoted Dr Stanley Randall, Director of Education in Ontario, Canada to emphasize his conviction. 'In all our striving for a good educational pattern', Randall saw 'principals and more specifically the secondary principal keeping the pivotal position'. (Cosgrove, 1972)

I think I have confirmed the significance of those statements as I have moved around the world. Maybe my judgement has been coloured by my own prejudices, but I believe I have discovered, quite objectively, that the best schools out of perhaps 300 that I have visited in fifteen countries, have all had principals whose own outlook was student-centred, and who believed in themselves as the signal persons who should be giving educational leadership. Conversely, when this was not so, sometimes in spite of the work of some brilliant teachers, the general atmosphere of the school was not conducive to learning and the tone of the staff and students was usually restless, lacking in direction and confidence and, in the worst cases, the schools were unhappy, unproductive places where rebellion and conflict were conspicuous.

These influences upon me, came during a decade when many systems were giving tremendous emphasis to the management role of the principal. Descriptions like organiser, interpreter, mediator in conflict, communicator, guide, listener, were common in the literature. Courses on educational administration were arising in the universities during this period and the words of the title certainly filled out the idea that the head of a school was an administrator who was there to manage the school. It would have been comfortable for me to have accepted the trend because I had organisational skill and a natural capacity to manage an institution efficiently. But I am quite willing to have my career judged on the quality of the leadership I brought to the education of children, rather than upon my skills as a manager, although these qualities must have contributed to the educational climate of the school.

D. Ogilvie from the University of Queensland in an article, in Australian Council of Educational Administration *Bulletin* (May 1981, p.15) argues for a 'clear line of demarcation' between the leadership function and the management-cum-administrative functions of human organisations, because they 'form opposite poles of a key dimension of organisation decision-making . . . Leadership is the intangible quality of behaviour which is novel within a given social situation . . . By creating an awareness of possibilities that were not previously considered', the leader influences the way other participants perceive the situation. Leadership is fundamentally concerned with change— spontaneous, creative, inventive, innovative change which may be related to the task, the structures or the network of personal relationships which characterise the institution.

By contrast, administration is concerned about existing structures and tasks which have already been defined. It assumes a certain social order. If new policies or goals are formulated, the manager implements those tasks usually within existing structures.

As we have already seen, there have been attempts to take leadership opportunities away from the principal, and to make him a functionary who simply manages the school. Some principals have aided the process by giving over the change role to various committees within the school and to wait on their decisions. The arrangement is usually uncomfortable, frustrating, and ineffective. The reasons are to be found within the power mechanisms in the school.

French and Raven distinguish five kinds of power— legitimate, coercive, reward, referent and expert, in *The Bases of Social Power*, (1968, pp.259 - 269). By virtue of their office, principals have the first three kinds of power. Through them, they are expected to manage their schools. They also have the power of superior knowledge (they probably know more about what is going on because their position makes them privy to information, not readily available to others). They can use their power and at times they must use it. The latter two kinds of power refer to the personal qualities, competence and judgement with which the leadership role is exercised.

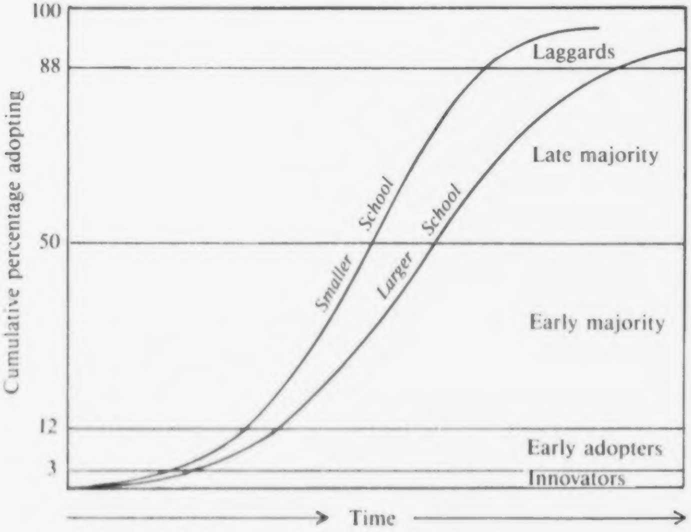
Now in these present circumstances, and certainly for me at Marion, I could only achieve the changes which were necessary through a combination of leadership and management skills using at times all of the powers available to me. In my observation, any achievement depended primarily upon my ability to address the issues and create possibilities of new goals and new ways of doing things for the teachers. (Once the process is in motion, some teachers offer valuable suggestions.)

The description I have given of the events and processes of change have suggested some resistance to change. Some would claim that alternative approaches where the power of decision was given over to the mass of the staff would have brought similar or better outcomes more rapidly. I reject that assertion on the evidence. Groups of teachers (or any other group) do not come easily to accept and implement change. Only perhaps one person in six is ready to change.

> The odds are in favour of a conservative settlement which will return to educational arrangements the relatively unproblematic and apparently acceptable appearance which they had 25 years ago. (Ashenden and Gallagher, 1980, p.24)

Thus the chances are heavily loaded against the change agent. In spite of the best techniques of leadership and persuasion as many as 12% or 1 in 8 will lag badly and may never accept change. The larger the staff, the tougher this group becomes and with the support of colleagues their resistance is hardened and somewhat protected. The problem does not usually show itself at first. Good ideas in response to a problem often get strong support which continues as the task is shaped and described. But mass voting will almost certainly waver around equal numbers for and against actually *implementing*

Figure 33.



Cumulative Curve–Modification added (Havelock, p. 108) a proposal. There is some comfort in knowing that the result of a vote is at least predictable. Change management strategies can be modified accordingly.

> The context in which each potential adopter lives is different: his reference groups are different, his perceptions are different, and the norms of the group are interpreted differently by each. Their adopting behaviour will therefore be different. Not only will adoption periods be different but they will also become aware of an innovation at different times. (Havelock cited in Morrish, 1976, p.73)

The process is a continuous one with the total number of teachers who adopt the change increasing over time. Havelock's curve shows the pattern of acceptance. For convenience the staff can be categorised using Havelock's terminology, (innovators, early adopters etc.) according to their rate of acceptance. My work as a consultant since my time at Marion, suggests strongly that Havelock's cumulative curve will have less slope for a larger staff. That is, acceptance and change proceed more slowly. The climate of the school at the time and the nature of the problems also influence the rate of acceptance.

Again experience shows that change proceeds more slowly when classroom practice is affected. This is where real changes in learning conditions for children are most influenced, and where the importance and the urgency would seem to be greatest.

Many colleagues, over the years, have been unwilling to work for changes they believed were important and necessary because of their perception of the degree of change they thought the system would tolerate.

> The tendency to anticipate trouble in relation to the system is characteristic of many principals, and one of the most frequent and strong obstacles to trying what they conceive to be an atypical procedure. (Sarason, 1971, p.139)

Likewise, some principals anticipate trouble with the public. And it is true that there is a degree of risk for those principals who venture away from established boundaries.

'In fact it is his strong sense of responsibility that frequently puts him in opposition to the system' (and some part of the public), but both groups are usually 'malleable' enough to 'tolerate diversity'. (Sarason, p.140) However systems do find it hard to support bold innovation and hence they put obstacles in the path of change, even changes they claim they want to encourage. Their processes are necessarily slow. They tend to move along behind their front runners, adjusting to their initiatives after the event.

Hence there are three important qualifications for principals to keep in mind when they contemplate changes in their schools:

> First, the knowledge . . . that what [the principal] wants to do may and will encounter frustrating obstacles, frequently serves as justification for staying near the lower limit of the scope of the role. Second, the principal's actual knowledge of the characteristics of the system is frequently incomplete and faulty . . . [which] leads him to a passive rather than an active role. Third . . . the range in practices among principals within the same system is sufficiently great so as to suggest that the system permits and tolerates [just about anything]. (Sarason, p.142)

Thus, when principals undertake their role as change agent and leader, they should take courage, gather information about the system (and the area in which they work) and accept the latitude it will permit. There is a marked tendency to see the system in negative terms, but in reality the actions of principals are determined more by what they are prepared to do than by external forces like the system or sections of the public.

Changes suggested for schools this century—like the activity movement, a variety of content revisions, field experience, work experience, core learning, increased attention to individual differences among students, supplementary resources from the community, use of visual and audio aids, to name a few—have never reached the classroom as they should have done. I have briefly outlined some of the outcomes of recent research which should have a 'compelling' influence on the classroom (see chapter 4). While change should never be entered into just for the sake of doing things differently, it is just as true that school people have a professional responsibility to keep pace with the findings of modern research.

Twenty years ago Lloyd Trump, an ex-principal of schools in USA, who later became research officer for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, centred in Washington, USA, was challenging assumptions about

- optimum class size
- single teacher instruction within a classroom
- the number of lessons per day and lesson length
- the size of the library being proportional to the enrolment and allotment of other resources on a per capita basis.

Trump wanted innovations like 'team teaching, independent study (at school as well as at home), large group instruction and small group discussion, flexible scheduling, use of teacher assistants, a revised curriculum content, and the application of newer technical aids'. (Trump, 1967) We all know about these ideas and examples of their use can be found, but their real value to the student-learner has rarely been realised. Organisational frameworks have usually been blamed for this but that explanation is too simple.

Trump usually concluded his articles for principals and teachers with words which urged them to 'work hard at the change-role business. But do not be timid. The big need is to take the first steps to change and to be patient. The rewards can be great' in teacher satisfaction and student achievement. He also urged principals to delegate administrative routines so that time was available for improving instruction. In spite of their position, enthusiasm, experience and charisma, or because of those qualities, Trump was telling the change agents that while the need to be assertive was necessary, it would not make their lot easy. I learned to be patient in the important area of helping teachers make fundamental changes to their role and their skills. I am not repentant about my impatience with those who wanted to take issue about any alterations to the administative trivia and organisational patterns which these changes required. The changes were required to make us as efficient as we could manage, in order to save time and energy for the more important task of teaching. I learned that we had to live with some compromises and occasional conflicts of interest, but that the seemingly easy course, requiring little more than cosmetic adjustment, was seldom in the best interests of anybody and especially the students.

Having accepted the challenges of leadership and the responsibility for the decisions taken, I found myself less torn by the dilemma of whether the decisions should be made autocratically or in a collegiate (democratic) manner. I became the one who must decide whether to make a certain decision, offer the staff the opportunity to make it, or adopt some intermediate position.

Time-Lag

It is interesting to note staff responses to new leadership initiatives. 'It takes time for administrators to develop the internal state of the organisation through such things as effective leadership: the results are not seen instantly'. (Owens and Steinhoff, 1976, p.67) In fact under a new leader it is highly likely that for a time the system will not perform as well as it did under the previous leader because of the problems that have their origins in the past, whether the system was good or bad at the time it was created.

Yet performances are unlikely to improve unless the leader has the confidence and the courage to act on current evidence. It is as well not to expect too much too soon, or to be too sensitive to what, at first, might be regarded as a poor result.

There is considerable research about leadership style, and I have already discussed these implications in chapter 12. The importance at this point is that, in adopting the transactional style, I discovered that I could be myself. It was an immense relief, for I could not imagine it otherwise. While I could move along the continuum between the extremes, according to the issue at the time, as a result of feeling comfortable, I was saved from waffling about indeterminately.

> The institution we call school is what it is because we (the education profession) have made it that way . . . If it is not doing what needs to be done it can be changed; it must be changed. (Postman & Weingartner, 1971, p.16)

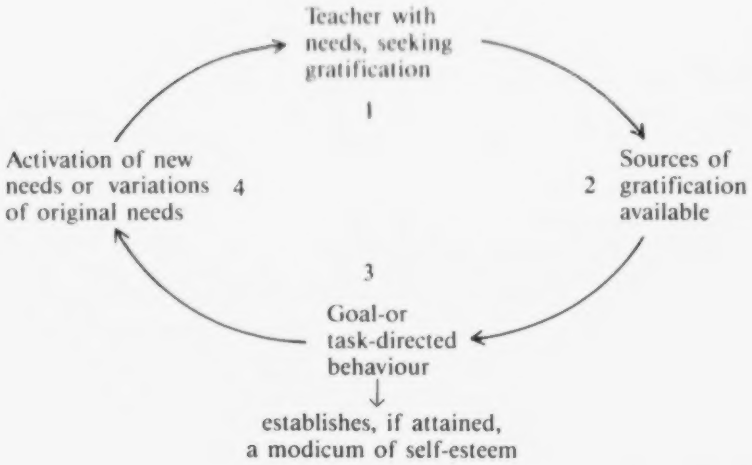
The basic fact must be faced that multitudes of proposals for change have become non-events, because, from the outset, leadership has been lacking at the top. Certainly one must create opportunities for teachers to participate in, and gain ownership of, a new order of things. Consultation will occur (ad nauseum!) and much patient ground work must be done, but progress will only be made when the principals exercise their leadership skills. They may express them through the staff members who show that they are willing to collaborate. Then the leader must hold the line while a new consensus is developing within the school.

It is my experience that new fundamental changes to the roles of teachers arise from the efforts of interested people who catch the vision and are given the chance to implement their dream. In this model, the principal must manage the structure in ways which allow the key teachers to fill out the canvas. It is not an easy task, but it becomes easier in an atmosphere where problems are tackled and where ideas are turned into actions, *around a firm philosophical base*. Incoordinated change soon leads to conflict and disillusionment.

There are built-in difficulties. Like all other human beings, teachers crave most for dignity and a sense of their own worth. Hence they will first look to the principal, as leader, to approve their work. Whatever is lacking and whatever is needed in the future, will be small in their minds compared with what they are already doing. The new order may, for example, require the teachers to express their concern for all their students in new ways, but the emphasis is upon 'new ways', and it is unlikely that their genuine care for kids should be questioned. Their caring may be misplaced, or bring wrong responses among the students, but that does not necessarily mean that the teachers do not care. Teachers, affirmed about their 'caring', are more likely to adopt new roles and express them in new behaviour patterns. Most will need to have their new efforts supported and their successes recognised. They must be brought to realise that it was really better to have failed sometimes than not to have tried at all.

For the principal, the task of keeping a staff's esteem high in a period of change is not always easy. General statements must be made, yet they will be interpreted personally. Any criticism will tend to overshadow what was praised and approved. Hence there is always pressure to speak with each person, to be a good listener, and a wise sensitive guide—no mean task. Some teachers will seek to make changes to what others in the group do not see as problem areas, and they will need sympathetic support.

Figure 34.


Teacher with needs, seeking gratification
1
Sources of gratification available
2
3
Goal-or task-directed behaviour
establishes, if attained, a modicum of self-esteem
Activation of new needs or variations of original needs
4

Self-value has to do with the attainment of goals. They may be modest at first, because the objectives that teachers set for themselves will reflect the goals which appear to them to be achievable. Once attained, it may be the leaders task to help them set slightly higher goals.

Dubrin, in *The Practice of Managerial Psychology*, (1972, p.270), sees this process as cyclic. He believes it is essential for motivation, that people regularly set themselves new and higher goals and it is the leader's task to make new sources of gratification available. Once a climate of change has been established, Dubrin points out that it is less difficult and the problem becomes one of how to control teaching plans so that they describe only moderate achievable challenges.

TASK-ORIENTED RESPONSE

I found Fiedler's findings (see chapter 12) that mass response to leadership of a large staff, would be task-oriented (even if the concern is intended to be less structured and about relationships) very helpful at this point. I found it necessary to follow up the mass response with a series of meetings with small, fairly homogenous sections of the staff (e.g. faculties, seniors, homestead staff groups) to talk over the problems which the group was confronting as it set out to implement a decision. The agenda of these meetings was to encourage the group members to help each other, to set short term goals and for me to aid that process through clarification of the expected or anticipated outcomes, and through suggestions about what action should be taken. Such meetings were supportive in nature and it was usual for those who came to the meeting feeling defeated and so opposed or hostile to an idea, to go away enthused. In effect, we were filling out Dubrin's second stage. Later meetings heard about small successes upon which new objectives could be built.

This model assumes that the work of implementing change is a learning experience for the teachers. It also employs the principles of mastery learning to achieve a satisfactory outcome. As somebody has said 'inch by inch it's a cinch—yard by yard it's too hard'.

Bill Pigott's approach to problem-solving (see chapter 24) has application here. I found it had special value to a group of teachers who were wrestling with an innovation. As the positive action steps were built up, I could discount the red-herrings and the genuine fears, by listing them as things we would have to deal with later. Hence the main development could go ahead unmolested, except for a subsequent challenge to resolve the difficulties which some had foreseen. Happily, by the end of the meeting, most of the restraints had usually been answered. Plans could then be made to resolve the other matters which then became the basis of added strength. Piggott's approach was important to a successful outcome of a project, because it seemed that some people could only see a new venture in terms of a mass of problems that had to be faced. It was not uncommon for people who were negative at first, to become active at the frontier of change once their worries had been dispersed. Hence the model provided a constructive approach to what can be a frustrating problem.

TEACHER CONTRIBUTIONS

So far, the discussion has ranged around the role of principals as leaders. But good leaders will encourage and support key teachers who, within the broad parameters of the school's aims, also act as change-agents in their own areas of expertise. They complement the influence that the principals have upon their schools. (See the collaborative-consensus model, chapter 12.)

The teachers have a role too. It goes beyond simple interpretation of a principal's lead. Within the philosophy, aims and objectives of the school, there is unlimited room for all of the teachers to make their own unique contributions. The structure must not prevent these ventures except when they contravene the school's philosophical position. Most teachers at Marion did things which were unique, based upon their own expertise, while some undertook special roles as school change agents. It is my belief that a clear set of aims, and a resolve to stay within them, releases the creativity of the teachers.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

For teachers new to the school, there can be difficulties at first. They commonly assume that their new school acts according to the culture of their previous school. The system by which appointments are made, based as they are, on subject expertise and little else, encourages this assumption. Teachers in their first appointment bring assumptions from their college or university, or from the school they attended. They may want the school to reinvent its wheel in the hope that the new wheel will be more like the one they already know.

Principals must be assertive at this point because they occupy the central position in the school. The leadership role implies that, as the main change agents, principals must also be custodians of what has been accomplished, so that development can continue. The immediate task is to introduce the newly appointed teacher to the school through deliberate orientation procedures. Once they have internalised the school's expectations and practices, they automatically become potentially significant contributors to the organic growth of the institution. New ideas are valuable so long as they do not lead to reversion to ways which have been painfully altered. They may stir up a department and lift the level of maintenance, but no more, until a thorough grounding in the philosophical and social stances of the school has been gained.

Since resistance to change is a natural, but troublesome phenomenon, the origins of this opposition should be addressed seriously, and its impact reduced as much as possible. Apart from conformity and general conservatism, 'any estimate of resistance which takes account only of the persons primarily and centrally concerned will be inadequate: the repercussions elsewhere may be even more influential in the survival of the innovation'. (Watson, 1969, p.488) It is difficult if not impossible, to change one part of a school without seriously affecting all other parts. There is ample evidence of this. Most of the teacher-led innovations of the mid-seventies have disappeared; destroyed by forces within schools. Attempts to solve senior school problems by adding subjects, but without changing time allocations, relationships between people in the school, or methodologies have largely failed. Conversely, by making new subjects available, pressure has been put upon all teachers to use time differently, to see students in a different light and to develop new classroom techniques.

The principal is uniquely placed to balance these forces and to deal with the restraining forces which arise across a school whenever a change is made in a particular area. The teachers directly concerned with the innovation are unlikely to have the power or influence needed to bring about associated changes in other areas—it is more likely that they will be told 'to mind their own business'. It is for this reason that many moves go cold, because those who gave support from a distance soon find that the approval they gave to somebody else's project has effects which include them as well.

We had a typical case at Marion when we set up a programme for our socially disabled students at Marion (see chapter 19 for details) during 1976 - 1979. Agreement among the staff was easy. There were teachers who would not be keen to join the project but wanted to be rid of the students from the classes with which they were associated. However, it was not long before it was the improvements in the behaviour of these students, not only as they participated in the special features of the programme but in the subjects they chose to study with other students, that began to challenge the teachers in *their* approaches to *their* own teaching —the way they treated *their* own students and the methods *they* used. As a result, a small but persistent group of teachers set out to undermine the programme and only the principal's strong intervention could arrest the tension and save the programme. Later, when a teacher sought to sever the programme from the rest of the school, it was other teachers who took the action which made it easier for the principal to stop the move. Replications of sequences of this kind serve to illustrate the place of the principal in the processes of total school change.

Watson also refers to the strong tendency of a school to reject outsiders. In my view, the theory being perpetrated by some of our senior officers, that a school can change itself totally from within, overlooks the nature of the best examples of change. However it does underline one important aspect. For change to occur, more than an initial input from an outsider, may be needed. Continuity of support is useful, but it still applies that unless the principal takes up the issue and actively helps interpret it in his or her school, real change will not occur. It is more likely that the conservative forces within the school will strengthen their position.

But notwithstanding these concerns and the strategies for minimising their influences, 'schools [still] take longer than is desirable to devise and adopt improved instructional and organisational procedures'. (Hills, 1968. p.108)

The 'paramount problem . . . the resistance to changing the values and instructional norms which form the main structural framework of the educational organisation (Hills, p.108) is posed by those who form the inner circle of influence at the student/teacher interface—the teachers. In assessing an alternative instructional procedure . . . personnel simply do not think in terms of the effects produced . . . independent of their own gratification'. (Hills, p.110) Nor do they gauge success in terms of the learning outcomes for the students. At first they respond to, and judge a move by behavioural changes such as improved attendance, better co-operation or more ready participation in their lessons. Unfortunately, 'knowledge that certain techniques produce better results does not insure that the knowledge will be utilised. Without motivational commitment to its utilisation (by a leader) it is unlikely to be utilised' (Hills, p.112) by the majority of the staff.

NEW PRINCIPALS

New principals too often assume a new broom approach rather than see a challenge to continue and further develop an idea or philosophy already existent in a school, except in the rare case where a school is completely lacking in enterprise. This alternative approach, which accepts the current momentum of developments, need not be an encumbrance. It can be a springboard for their own leadership.

Of course this approach presses the new principal into learning about the school very quickly. In our system, it must lift our professionalism to a level where the changeover is a prolonged period of communication, learning and even planning. The unique role of the principal makes it essential. I never had this privilege, although I sought it. My experiences ranged from a few minutes explanation of the key-ring to a superficial conducted tour, and some conversation with some staff members who wanted approval for their projects (always a lift). But in practice the action comes quickly. Without the opportunity to learn about my new appointment, I made some serious mistakes for which I deserved condemnation from the afflicted. None of these embarrassing memories arose out of unconsidered or unnecessary action, but came out of pressure to respond to situations which demanded immediate decisions.

Well-intentioned programmes from Canberra and head office, which urge new reviews as though no school was facing its current or future problems, add to the challenge to principals to keep on leading. One fears that the outcome sometimes has been greater resistance to change, rather than the beginning of new life. Hopefully the Senior Secondary School Students Project of the South Australian Education Department has avoided this pitfall. I believe that it tried to identify with schools 'where they were', and to give them services which they perceived they needed in terms of their own future.

THE IDEAL IS ELUSIVE

Change can never achieve an ideal situation. New social influences alone will require new initiatives, yet I have argued for continuity because each new phase can then bring the strengths of the previous phase with it.

Most principals at some time, whatever their personality or style, have wanted to sit back in peace knowing that they have the unqualified goodwill of the staff. Some will long for such an experience, but it is most unlikely that it can be realised.

In this concept of leadership, the principal is rather like the conductor of two orchestras (the school): the one with teachers playing the instrument of their faculty, the other composed of students who play the instruments best suited to their own distinctive characters and the sub-groups to which these individuals belong. When the two orchestras attempt to play together, a good outcome can only arise when the players are in harmony with one another. The good conductor tries to strengthen each group, and to help it see its role within the single harmony of the whole orchestra. Although all of the parts except one are playing in harmony, it is the one that is out of tune which catches the attention and decides the impression that is gained by the audience. The illustration also serves to indicate the tremendous complexity because, not only must all the parts of each orchestra become effective, but it is also necessary for the two orchestras to be able to combine to make one harmonious whole. There is no room for dissident discords, nor can one part be effective alone however efficient its techniques, if it does not integrate with the whole.

In this regard Marion's record has been pretty good, but it must not be imagined that it happened easily or that there were not some bad periods, and some disagreeable passages. While the inside activity goes on, the conductor has to battle for space and equipment (instruments) to operate. He must fend off those other agencies which would try to interrupt or try to undermine a section. He must also seize upon offers of help and support and stay mindful of his responsibility to his audience (parents and community), for without them he will soon be without his orchestra or he will be left without some of the instruments he needs to produce the best sound (outcome). Each loss will start a vicious circle as one loss leads to another and so on. He will have to cope with those who suggest he can get along by borrowing an instrument from elsewhere, or by doing without the lead violinist or by providing an incompetent section leader. In reality the leader will be forced to cover up a weakness thrust upon him because, if it is exposed, he will be the one under attack and reproach. Both parties suffer similarly, but at different levels, so that it is not surprising that the system will try to bolster its weak spots at the expense of the schools which are experiencing better fortunes.

COMPLEX SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The influences with which the principal must contend do not stop with students, teachers and other immediate parties. At times, to extend the illustration, there are other musical groups to orchestrate and include into its whole.

Broadly, there are four parties interested in a school:

External Groups
- the public including the parents
- the Education Department

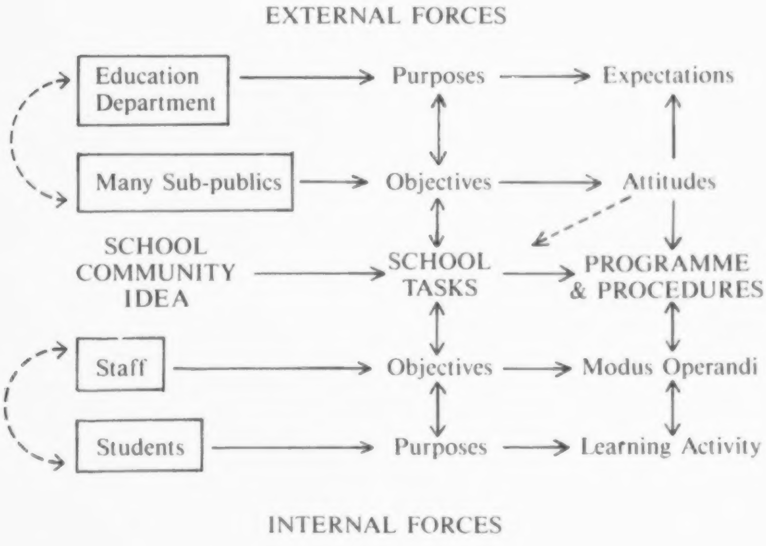
Internal Groups
- the teachers
- the students.

Each has several sub-groups, but each group and especially the teachers and students tend to close ranks when they feel threatened. It is not the size of a sub-set that is important, but the ability of the group to articulate its case.

Clearly different groups have different power bases and levels of influence, which they exploit in the way they believe will best serve their interests.

The staff are more interested in how a change will affect the modus operandi they are used to following. The students' interests are focussed upon the subjects offered, the learning activity and the environment in which they will become involved. Sometimes an articulate group of parents can threaten the balance but it is the powerful vitally interested teachers who can put their case strongly and clearly that presents the greatest challenge. Less divided, inclined to join forces when a colleague claims they are under threat, on site, their mix of sound argument and irrational defensiveness cannot be put aside lightly. It is unlikely that the interests of the various groups can ever be completely congruent and just as unlikely that any set of propositions will fit together comfortably as in a jig-saw puzzle, unless there is intervention and negotiation with a leader who can act according to a clearly stated set of aims. The following figure may help:

Figure 35.


EXTERNAL FORCES
Education Department
Purposes
Expectations
Many Sub-publics
Objectives
Attitudes
SCHOOL COMMUNITY IDEA
SCHOOL TASKS
PROGRAMME & PROCEDURES
Staff
Objectives
Modus Operandi
Students
Purposes
Learning Activity
INTERNAL FORCES

There is another form of division which cuts across all of the parties. It is between those who want to be conservative and those whose needs require new initiatives. The conservative elements within each interest group are fearful of and sometimes feel threatened by new moves, even when they do not directly affect them at the time. Talcott Parsons differentiates between four functions in an institution—the adaptive, governing function concerned with the allocation of facilities; the management, policy implementation and co-ordination function, which relates to the mobilisation of resources and human support respectively; the technical operations or implementation function, carried on by teachers; and, the productive function, which is concerned with outcomes for the clients (the students).

Figure 36.

Institutional ---> Governing function — Parents
High School Council
Education Department

Managerial ---> Managing function — Principal/Deputy Principal

Technical ---> Teaching function — Teachers

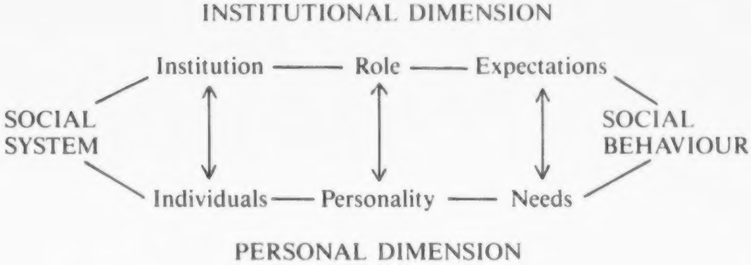
Productive ---> Learning function — Students

The value pattern then defines a direction of choice and consequent commitment to action. (Talcott Parsons, cited in Williams, 1971, p.129) There is a qualitative break between each level.

The way each sub-group sees the same issue is conditioned by its experience, and by the way it anticipates a proposal or procedure will react upon the area of their special interest. People who undertake different functions at different times, are likely to make separate responses for each role. The matter is complicated by the fact that any party can withhold its contribution, at least to some degree, if it chooses.

Principals are engaged in a set of interactions between the institutional and the more personal dimension of the school community—institutional roles and individual personalities; institutional expectations and personal aspirations. Both may or may not moderate their claims in order to accommodate the other as comfortably as possible and to save tensions and conflicts that are counter-productive for both. Thus, the leader must adopt a framework that will encourage the parties to accept the change. Each new idea and procedure must be communicated. Management requirements must be accessible and visible, and there must be an inventory which can be understood by all the parties.

Figure 37.



(Getzels & Guba, 1957, p. 429)

While the introduction of a change must be efficient it does not mean that the principal can disregard human considerations—the human dignity, feelings of satisfaction and even self-actualisation

> of all the parties affected. But he must take up the cudgels needed to succeed or his position will be eroded.
>
> At once, he must be supporter, protector, encourager, mediator and instructor, [if he cannot] there seems to be no alternative except to resign from the position of principal. (Owens & Steinoff, 1976, p.60)

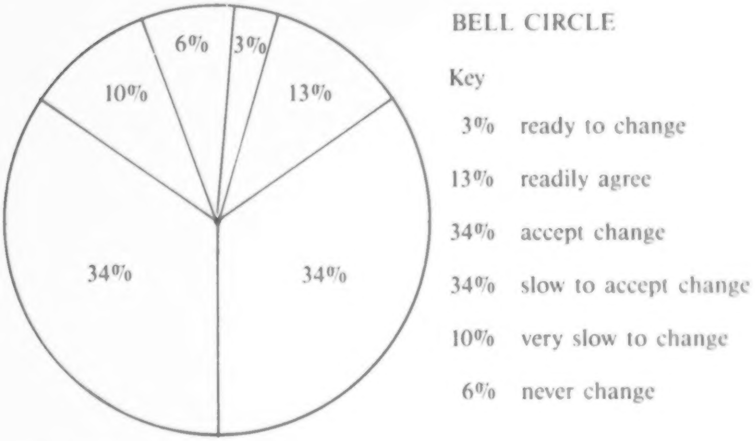
As principal, one soon appreciates that it is necessary 'to think of the school community in terms of its various reference groups or sub-publics and [to] understand something about their inter-relations and value positions' in order to gain 'a more realistic notion of what is possible in the community and where work must begin if school programmes are to receive community support'. (Getzels, Lipham & Campbell, 1968, p.378)

MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

Principals cannot be blamed for thinking that their job is to avoid conflict at all costs. Any messages about conflict among members of a staff or between the principal and some staff member, have often led to unkind judgements by system officials who, all too often, seek to intervene without examining the context in which the conflict has arisen. It is likely that the offended are stubbornly resisting a collaborative decision that has come after hours of consultation over many weeks, even years, or responding to an attempt to overcome extreme incompetence.

No principal really wants conflict in his school. Few of those who would be the judges seem to want to believe that principals live in tension between their responsibility and ultimate accountability on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the compulsion for them to proceed through consultation, consensus and collaboration. In the context of change, absolute consensus is rare. Bell's conclusion, (see figure following), that only 3% readily make changes, is repeatedly borne out by experience and most will assimilate change slowly, if at all. It does become necessary for the leader to insist that a final minority must accept the decision and work with it, contrary to the position they might favour. At best, this is a professional tension. At worst, principals may find themselves in personal conflicts which they have not sought. Parents may be equally frustrating.

Figure 38.



Hence, in any consideration of conflict in schools, it is best that we work with the certain knowledge that there will be antagonism from time to time. High-performing schools are not free from dissension, but have well developed structures for dealing with it. For example, at Marion at least twice each year, the staff was encouraged, by using techniques which kept the anonymity of the individual, to bring out all of their 'itches'. While the option to raise a problem was always present there were always some teachers who would not come forward on their own. Sometimes they were extremely critical within the safety of their own friends. This technique brought the issues into the open. There was usually a whole range of troubles, each confined to a few individuals, with whom the matters could be dealt with easily.

During the course of the discussions, many difficulties were resolved for a teacher by colleagues in the group. Once the list of 'complaints' had been established, and their precise nature clarified, they had to be dealt with quickly. Many problems came under the general heading of 'keeping to the rules for the sake of the majority', others to a breakdown in communication in an area for a range of reasons such as the person joining the staff *after* the issue had been highlighted most recently. Other concerns were matters of efficiency in dealing with routine matters, the need to carry them out, the form in which they were carried out and/or the timing of various tasks. Usually it was possible to create an atmosphere in which it was readily possible to identify the afflicted and to find an acceptable solution, or, if that was not possible then general information could be circulated through which the afflicted could have the cause of their irritation relieved. For some issues it was necessary to underline the present practice, reiterating the reasons for it. But the purpose of preventing little sources of irritation building up into bigger ones, was somehow achieved.

Some might argue that these problems should have been resolved through direct approaches and, of course, scores of little problems were dealt with in that way each week, but there were still some troubles which were avoided through this strategy. From time to time an objective general look at the list and the 'tone' of the reporting, would suggest that the items raised added up to a pressure bubble common to a greater number of teachers, yet symptomised by a variety of small issues. On these occasions some action aimed to release the pressure was all that was needed. Sometimes the sources of conflict were hard to pin point, yet there was ample evidence of deep feeling among members of the staff. It might then be necessary for the principal to invite somebody else on the staff, or from outside the school, to gather some data about the problem and then invite the parties to test the accuracy, and the relative importance of the issues.

Since most of the teachers were involved in the processes of change, the stress upon them was high whether they approved or disapproved of the new development. In a busy week it might have become a little too much. A small release of pressure, and evidence of sympathy, could be a help. As a person who found it easier than most to adapt to new forms, I was slow to appreciate that some people have a low level of tolerance of change and need time to make the adjustments. The strategy that has been outlined here did much to help me to understand the torment that some people suffer as they wrestle with new ideas and practices.

Very often it is assumed that better communication will solve individual and group tensions. The solution is too simple. 'Communication needs to be seen . . . in relation to the social system in which it occurs'. (Schmuck, Runkel, Saturen, Martell and Durr, 1972, p.81) In a school there are informal do's and don'ts. 'They are rarely written down anywhere, but they serve as a kind of code, making it clear what people in the school should and should not do if they are to be accepted by others'. (Schmuck et al, 1972, p.46) How does your (my) staff member usually act?

1. Ask others who seem upset to express their feelings directly.
2. Tell colleagues what they really think of their work.
3. Look for ulterior motives in other people's behaviour.
4. Always ask 'Why?' when they don't know.
5. Avoid disagreement and conflict whenever possible.
6. Consult with people under them in making decisions that affect them—even minor ones.
7. Question well-established ways of doing things.
8. Be concerned about other people's problems.
9. Only make a decision after everyone's ideas have been fully heard.

10 Disagree with their superior if they happen to know more about the issue than he or she does.
11 Withold personal feelings and stick to the logical merits of the case in any discussion.
12 Push for new ideas, even if they are vague or unusual.
13 Ask others to tell them what they really think of their work.
14 Keep their real thoughts and reactions to themselves, by and large.
15 Trust others not to take advantage of them.
16 Be sceptical about things.
17 Point out other people's mistakes, to improve working effectiveness.
18 Listen to others' ideas, but reserve the decision to themselves.
19 Try out new ways of doing things, even if it is uncertain how they will work out.
20 Stay 'cool'—keep their distance from others.
21 Use formal voting as a way of making decisions in small groups. (Provided by Miles, State University of Albany, New York: Quoted by Schmuck et al, 1972, pp.46 - 48)

The collective response describes the collegiate attitudes and behaviour of the school community, and gives a lead to the kind of action which will help to make the institution open with itself. In identifying the characteristic action-forms, the teachers gain a more objective knowledge of the behaviour other people expect of them. Now, more comfortable, they perform better, and feel less in conflict with colleagues, including those in status positions.

Feed-back

It also helps the leader if he can create conditions where feed-back is given freely. To achieve that end the relationships should be relaxed, non-threatening and considerate, expecting no more than the person is prepared to give at the time. It helps if the leader encourages his staff to give objective descriptions of facts and, if responses are looked for, to react as quickly as possible. In a change situation, it is useful to avoid (isolate) things which cannot be changed and to concentrate attention upon the things which are capable of modification. For example, in describing the use of a library, a person might mention excess numbers of students and the shape of the building. Clearly some control of the first is possible, but the building is there, and its outside walls may not be moved. It will be useful to identify the unchangeable item and concentrate upon a response to the difficulty about student numbers.

Sometimes emotions are stirred because some event has set off a rash of unfortunate comment. Rather than react to the comments in similar vein, I learned to try to enable the person to become aware of the facts of the situation, and the reasons for the emotional response so that, now aware, the afflicted persons were better able to describe the origin of their feelings. Perceptions could then be corrected or modified without loss of principle.

While it is sometimes necessary to respond aggressively to a conflict of interests, the approach, alone, seldom brings a permanent solution. I found it was valuable to follow up, with less emotional, less authoritative approaches which were less judgemental and more capable of mutually acceptable solutions. There is little to be gained by principals expressing hurt or looking for sympathy. As principals, they are responsible and accountable. On the other hand, genuine emotion can help communication in both directions.

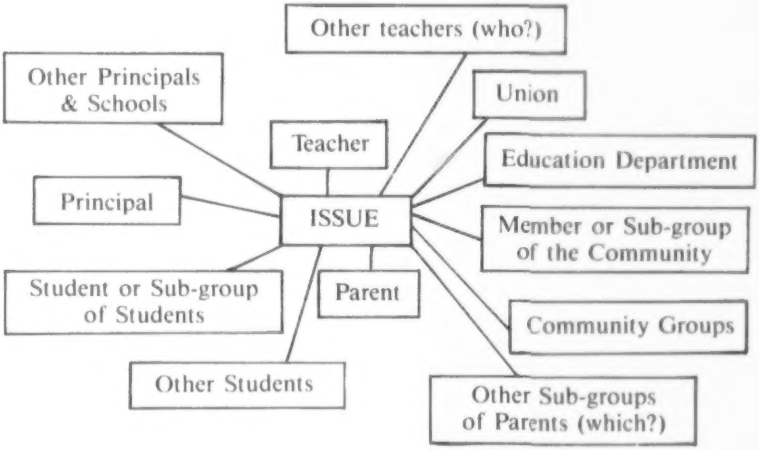
The principal can sometimes get in early, and save deep conflict by reacting to indicators of unrest. A conversation might be opened with 'Joyce, you seem to be angry about something. Will you share it with me so that I can help and if I'm guilty can make amends?' The trouble usually tumbles out, and in the doing begins to lose its intensity. I think I discovered that left to 'get over it', a chance to build a good relationship with a teacher could be lost.

In all of this of course, the sincerity, competence, and good will of the principal, are put on the line. A staff member may be good enough to allow the principal to see his or her own faults, so that he or she can come to grips with a situation. This is all very human, and most people (even principals) like to be forgiven for their human foibles and inadequacies and to be accepted for what they are. When that kind of relationship has developed, the professional issues can be dealt with professionally and the need to act assertively is considerably lessened. The more honest and open principals can be about their part in an affair, the more likely it is that other parties will do likewise.

Other Tensions

But teachers were not the only source of conflict, nor were the parties to a row, limited to teachers. With this in mind there were two matters which affected the processes that could be used to resolve tensions. It took me some time to realise that teachers and students might not hear the message I was trying to communicate, in the way I intended it to be heard.

Figure 39.


Other teachers (who?)
Other Principals & Schools
Union
Teacher
Education Department
Principal
ISSUE
Member or Sub-group of the Community
Student or Sub-group of Students
Parent
Community Groups
Other Students
Other Sub-groups of Parents (which?)

So, to avoid misunderstanding and frustration, I had to compose my messages to teachers from the stand point of teachers and speak to students with their position in mind. Likewise I had to see a problem from the technical or productive stand point and help the teachers or students to understand the problem in the managerial or institutional setting. I had also to write my reports to the high school council or Education Department with the stand point of each of these bodies in mind. Different words and even a different voice might be appropriate.

These observations lead to my second point. When a controversial issue arose, I had to learn that it involved more parties than myself and the person or group raising the issue. It was almost inevitable than any decision would have repercussions in other areas.

For example, some moral issues may be so at variance that they do not allow the option of compromise. It may be better to 'opt out' of any *formal* approach to avoid the dangers of an awkward compromise (best solution) which at best, would be unsatisfactory to most parties. It is far more satisfactory to prepare the staff as far as possible to deal with these matters, as they arise, in the safety of the homestead structure which supports informal teaching and learning.

Likewise, emotional conflicts within the school, perhaps involving a serious complaint from a parent, teacher or student, were best dealt with informally. Such questions as the following had to be asked and answered. Who were the inner ring of people involved? Who else would be affected by a possible solution?It was out of this extended web that a satisfactory solution had to be found. My own convictions may have had little to do with the action chosen! And sometimes compromise may be difficult! Yet, since the principals of the schools remain accountable for the outcome, the atmosphere which gives the best promise of a satisfactory outcome will be one in which all of the parties feel free to explore a matter either while a decision is being made, or after it has been adopted.

28

TENSION WITH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Principals who have a clear view of what they want their schools to provide for their students, and the ways they expect students will achieve those goals, will inevitably come into conflict with some aspects of the system and with sections of the central bureaucracy.

Tension is most likely if the school's programme departs from the norm. Only recently, a high-ranking Education Department officer disclosed that at least once a year at the highest level, a discussion occurred which might have led head office to impose sanctions against the Marion programme. Sometimes decisions were taken to absorb our actions and to modify their own procedures. Presumably at other times the school's actions were tolerated. Sometimes a senior officer circulated generally, throughout the service, instructions which the school could not or did not accept because they would handicap its operation. In the end, the proponents of bureaucratic dictation made money matters the issue. But, even in this conflict, the real concern was over our decisions to use unusual procedures to tackle new problems which demanded new solutions (see chapter 25).

The issue is a difficult one for both parties. In the interest of smooth administration and out of an anxiety to meet the political demands of the time, there will be ways of doing things which develop routine status and come to be regarded as inviolate. The parochial view is that the established ways of doing things have been proved to be the best over the years and leave no reason for any modification. The assumptions (usually unwritten) are accepted as clear and unbreakable. While suggestions for changes may, theoretically be welcomed, unless a serious situation develops, the almost invariable response is a set of reasons for keeping the status quo. It is believed that any change should come from the top and only after considerable airing in the administrative offices, and with the 'advice' of those who have vested interest in keeping things as they are. However there *will be* some reformers who are frustrated by the impediments they face and are able and willing to risk 'the wrath' and improvise alternatives. But it is by no means certain that these people will tolerate a similar procedure by an underling like a principal out in the field.

Against that background, principals who place their priorities with their students, may not be willing to risk the inevitable contest that must be entered into to have their needs met. They might not even be able to wait for changes to be approved, because the time constraints of the circumstances in the school do not allow them to wait for official approval. Therefore, one must act and wait for the reprimand which will inevitably come though one suspects sometimes that the 'caning' has been delivered without spirit or conviction.

I was not prepared to sit by and watch youngsters being destroyed by the impersonal aspects of the system. Therefore I became guilty on more than one occasion of disrupting the system and interceding for students who would otherwise be lost as they became caught up in the ways of the bureaucracy.

When he issued his 'Freedom and Authority' Memorandum, (1970), the Director of Education in South Australia at the time, Mr A. Jones, quipped that the statement gave the principals more freedom to use their authority than most would care to exercise. The document set up parameters within which principals had ultimate authority in their schools. Like all worthwhile 'freedoms', the latitude given to principals carried a degree of responsibility which was assumed by most observers at the time to include only current practices. But it was the unforeseen outcomes of *responsible* reaction to the deficiencies of the curriculum, new social attitudes, and changes in the financial arrangements in schools, which provided the base for disputes about authority and responsibility. The accuracy of Jones' observation decreased the scope of the potential ferment to an occasional small bubble. Any big bubbles were generated by the very few principals who were prepared to chance their hand and challenge the system.

The interim committee (Chairman: Professor P. Karmel) for the Australian Schools Commission, in Canberra,

> began its report 'Schools in Australia' by defining the process of schooling in a way which helped to stimulate the beginning of a much needed public discussion. It focussed on the individual students in schools and on the society in which and for which they are being educated. It explored the concept of equality of educational opportunity; and it supported the values of devolving responsibility to those actually involved in the task of schooling, of diversity among schools, and of community involvement in schooling. (1973, Section 1.21, p.5)

The interim committee observed that 'government schools have to be more responsive to changes in the society around them', and the committee wanted teachers and schools to have more say in decision making. Somehow, though, top administrators expected principals to accommodate the results of teacher and public ferment, without any significant changes to the structure. Perhaps it was not possible to foresee the structural change that would be needed, but there was little evidence, in spite of a show of consultation, of a desire to accept variations from the old norms.

In this atmosphere the role, even the existence, of the principal of a school was being questioned. There was often the assumption that the leadership drive for change would come from 'the grassroots' and that the principal would be a sort of 'secretary' to implement their decisions. Of course, had this happened, chaos would have evolved. But more important, it soon became clear that real change could only occur under an educational leader—the principal (see chapter 27). Any move to destroy his office could only result in the emergence of a leader (principal) with largely the same role. It should have re-emphasised the importance of the roles of the principal as educational leader as well as general manager. Unfortunately, the more common result was a principal who kept hold of the management reins but gave over curriculum decisions to his staff. The conservatives in the bureaucracy seized on this outcome to keep the status quo on the grounds that principals were not ready to accept greater responsibility and autonomy.

Those who did attempt to become leaders in the field of education soon discovered that they were lonely people, little supported on real issues by their head-office 'colleagues', and hamstrung by many of the old procedures. It also put them in conflict with the ambitious elements on their staff who wanted latitude to pursue new curriculum designs. The only tangible evidence that the predicament of the principal was recognised, came through the industrial courts which awarded higher salaries and helped establish a higher salary bracket for principals in charge of especially complex schools. It is to his credit that the minister of education at the time realised that the ability of schools to cope with the forces which were active in the 'hotter' spots, would depend upon the leadership of the principal.

It was in this atmosphere that Marion entered upon a period of change. Clearly aware of my educational leadership role, and of the outcomes I saw as relevant (and often hearing my staff, parents and students giving their views), it was inevitable that there would be times when, as principal, I would be compelled to confront some members of the staff and when I would need to act in ways not readily acceptable to the Education Department.

The principal's predicament is emphasised by a true story told by T.V. star, Johnny Cash.

> A four year old boy was lost—he had wandered off from his farm-house home. People gradually added themselves to the search party but their search was in vain. By the fourth day, the whole town of four thousand souls were involved but still the boy was not found. The frantic father called the people together—three thousand searchers—and reasoned that the boy must be in the fields, and that he could not have wandered very far. He suggested that they link hands in a long line and in a disciplined way, move across the land. That way they must find the boy.
>
> So they did. Before they had advanced a quarter of a mile, one of the searchers found the boy and called the father. As the Dad gathered up the lifeless boy in his arms he called out in anguish—'Why didn't we join hands sooner and find the little boy alive?'

The boy in the story was only four years old. However, the context of the same story could be told over and over again about boys and girls in the 12 - 20 year old age bracket. Perhaps 70% of our youngsters need to be found before they 'die'—through loss of their self-esteem, or through some action which stems from society's failure to recognise their worth. The statistics are frightening, yet we fail to get together and use the new knowledge we have to help these youngsters. Self-interest, ambition, ignorance and the inertia of large institutions enable adults to rationalise actions which are against the best interests of youngsters. There are plenty of problems to be overcome but I am convinced we could achieve much more if we had the will to find solutions and the courage to implement them.

At best Marion followed a path of uneasy relationships with its masters, and with other schools. This is a phenomenon shared by others in many systems world-wide who have dared to be different. We were continually challenged to prove ourselves, yet no proof could ever be convincing enough. We were continually being checked out by somebody, but seldom through a frank up front interchange. This kind of interchange was so rare, that the occasions, the people, and the circumstances stand out in our memory. There is the distinct impression that real support was offered at a personal price.

It is worth noting the many parallels between Marion's story, and England's Countesthorpe story, in spite of the considerable differences and circumstances in origin of the two schools. Countesthorpe, like Marion, set out 'to serve the identifiable needs of its students for the present and the future. This did not imply a rejection of the past, so much as a resolve to question any established practice for its validity in these terms, instead of continuing it automatically'. Time, weariness and pressure might lead the school to 'concentrate on improving the system in terms of conventional measures . . . rather than on fundamental issues . . . not designated as an experimental school it does not receive unusual resources in any way'. (Watts, 1977, p.28) True also for Marion, but luckily Marion has not become the focus of the level of public brick throwing and harassment which Countesthorpe suffered. But that was the only difference.

A.S. Neill set out 'to make the school fit the child'. (Neill, 1962, p.20) Whatever our judgement of his school, we have to agree with Sir Herbert Read who observed that 'it signifies a great experiment in education' which made its contribution 'despite much discouragement and revilement' (cover comment of *Summerhill*, 1962). Our experience was similar—many visiting teachers and administrators came to use our time and list our faults.

Like Dawson College in Canada, Summerhill and Countesthorpe, and I suspect many other educational institutions, Marion was 'no expression of someone's whim'. It has weathered thirteen years now, yet some still talk about Marion as some kind of 'experiment', implying that it should not yet be taken too seriously. 'If the vision is clear enough, there is probably no point in weighing the cost. Ultimate good should be the automatic result—but the emotional toll has often been heavy'. (Gallagher and MacFarlane, 1976, p.21) When I met the Principal of Dawson College, Paul Gallagher in British Columbia, he still carried some of the marks, of one who had been sacrificed and exiled for his pains. Yet his vision had survived. He paid a cruel price, and not one I was forced to pay.

I believe that most people are not aggressive and destructive toward others except when they are under the sort of severe stress that our social system sometimes inflicts on them. Competitiveness, excessively emphasised status and the bid for hard evidence of success, all continually threaten them with a compulsion to drive toward 'upward' mobility. Unfortunately, successful innovation, especially when unconventional approaches to acknowledged problems are involved, stirs much of the inhumanity that occurs. As much as one would like to work closely with the people whom unorthodoxy threatens, the parties are driven apart by the impulse the system people feel to control our every action.

In 1980, Marion was visited by a high ranking Education Department official who became very excited about what he saw, and by what teachers and students told him. He said that he believed other schools should have the opportunity to study what had occurred. 'I would like to film the school in action—but would others mind'? No more came of the suggestion.

To proceed comfortably, a programme with the ramifications of the Marion programme needs wholehearted Education Department and regional support and backing. I believe that we received more protection than support, though there were instances of 'brave support'. For the rest, our success was often looked upon with suspicion and given credit in the only terms people knew. They chose to believe, in spite of evidence to the contrary, that the school had received help above the norm, or was situated somehow in a privileged situation. While it would not be useful to try to make comparisons, I believe it is true that Marion was given a poorer, not better, deal as Education Department and regional people tended, maybe unconsciously, to respond to the contention which made people believe that Marion had already received favoured treatment.

There is considerable evidence that a successful outcome to any enterprise needs committed people. Over the decade it has not been the 'difficult' teachers and officials who have held the project back. Those teachers who questioned what was happening and even rebelled at times, often proved to be its strength. It was the 'goodies' who made things difficult. They were the teachers and officials who used the 'right' words yet tried to ignore or belittle the programme's real content through their behaviour, their comments to students or colleagues, or through their general 'advice' to people, or by leaving the suggestion in people's minds that the success was idiosyncratic and not based upon careful planning, research and other objective evidence. Some tried to turn the philosophical and pedagogical basis into a sham. When we had difficulty they were like messengers who look into a mirror and say to the image 'you have the problem, not me'.

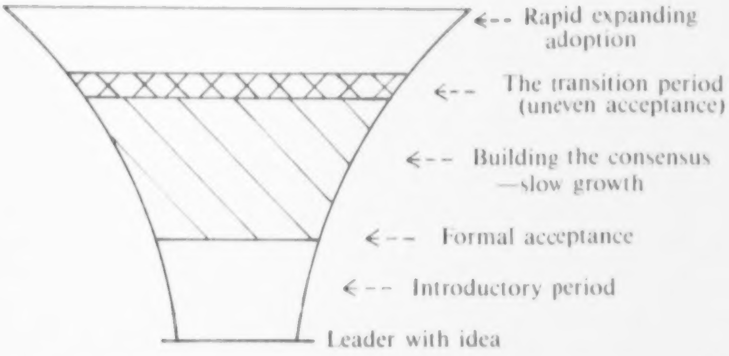
The best people gave support in the end, because evidence soon began to accumulate which showed that students were benefiting. These people accepted research evidence, and gut indications alike, and modelled their work in sympathy with the facts to get the best educational outcome. These teachers and administrators were the real professionals. The 'goodies' tried to testify against research. They collected old cliches of an earlier age, such as the 'tight ship' imagery and quoted them to protect their own position. They made a sham of professionalism, yet they often won approval because they stayed within the safety of conservatism and superior numbers.

As an idea spreads, gathering formal acceptance is a relatively easy matter.

The hardest thing is to build a real consensus, especially as staffs continually change and far too often the only pre-knowledge of the school the newcomers have gained, has come to them through mischievous rumour. So often our first task was to confront a pre-judgement based on hearsay (sometimes laughable nonsense). Sometimes a personnel officer, who had never been to the school, would apologise to teachers for appointing them to Marion. The first days in a new school are hard enough, without a negative beginning point. Hence it often took two years, sometimes longer, of careful patient nurture to change those misconceived attitudes.

The following diagram illustrates the growth process which starts with the few (see previous chapter) and then builds towards a broad consensus before it is assimilated and adopted. Too many changes to personnel slow the process of digestion of new ideas and encourage people to challenge their adoption. Changes develop slowly, especially when they are costly in energy to begin with, or when the issue affects numbers of different parties on campus, within the extended school community and away from school. It is not until the facts shows that there is reward for particular individuals, that some (many!) of them will seriously make an effort to adopt or accept a new approach. Hence it takes time, and persistent work among individuals to build real acceptance.

Figure 40.



<-- Rapid expanding adoption
<-- The transition period (uneven acceptance)
<-- Building the consensus —slow growth
<-- Formal acceptance
<-- Introductory period
Leader with idea

There is much in the idealistic literature which suggests that the principal will gain tremendous help from his parent bodies. He may be led to believe that they are very keen to assist him energetically at the least suggestion. Of course it will be true that most parent groups—council or whatever—will give a lot of help. However in low socio-economic areas there are few articulate people, while in a more affluent area the people may not want to emphasise concepts which do not serve their own interests. Few people have the time to give tangible consistent help. Hence the leader is confronted with the task of interpreting the mind of the people—he or she must articulate the need and give direction. The Education Department will also want a say in what is happening. It may want to arbitrate on the grounds that it is ultimately responsible. To return to the orchestral analogy from the previous chapter, other orchestras may want to play too, and they have potential to be useful, but they may want to use their own score. It is the role of the conductor (leader) to marshal these resources, and to bring them into single harmony. When necessary he or she must also be arbiter and final decision-maker.

At the final analysis, he or she will be judged on and held responsible for the quality of the performances. The public will vote with their feet at the 'box office'. In the end it is these considerations, and not a subservience to the Education Department or the council or some special interest group which decides the success or otherwise of the school enterprise. This basic change in relationships is the one promoted by government and its department through the Jones document, but strangely not supported in practice. Would it have been different if the flow of money of the mid-seventies had continued? I do not know, but I suspect that there is not much of a connection, and that the main reason for the tension created for the principal, who would see the priorities differently, is to be found in internal power struggles.

The System and the Need

In our system there is seldom an opportunity to select a staff member, except in the negative sense of rejecting a new appointee—a very different situation since it requires giving documented evidence that a relatively unknown person will be unsatisfactory. Industrial agreements add to the difficulty because the rules often decide the issue and the needs of a particular school form no part of the decision. Even in systems where the school has power to dismiss a teacher, this process is difficult to accomplish.

For mainly historic reasons in South Australia, we have had a centralised staffing policy for many years. While attempts have been made to increase local input, principals have won little direct involvement in decisions about appointments of particular people to their staff. Education Department policy, in spite of much rhetoric to the contrary, seems to be directed towards uniformity across all schools. Liaison with area (regional) staffing officers is often very good, but the real decisions are often actually made by clerks or education officers who are still appointing 'Maths' or whatever teachers from a list with little knowledge of a school's need and no brief to do otherwise. Senior appointments are made without any provision for some non-subject oriented responsibilities. Job descriptions which have been supplied by schools are finally ignored or remain unfilled for any number of reasons. Even if goodwill exists, the school, its principal and sometimes the Education Department, may have little control over the actual persons appointed to a staff, yet compatability with the philosophical stance is fundamental to the satisfaction of all parties. With pressures toward uniformity operating, it should not be surprising that teachers perpetuate the problem by nominating schools on criteria such as their proximity to the area in which they live or hope to live.

A system will always have good and not so good teachers and a desire to provide each school with a mix is understandable. Yet this concern is not really at the heart of the problem which is exacerbated more by the teacher's view of the task than by incompetence.

For many reasons which need not be detailed, it must be acknowledged that the system has a high degree of mobility. Lack of promotion positions has been a steadying influence. However, a series of rules about transfer, industrial agreements, and the natural accidents in people's lives keeps the staff turning over. It seems to me that frequent change tends to keep the schools more the same than they would otherwise be. Teachers are moved about in a single system rather than appointed to a school to do a unique job. Uniformity in itself breeds stagnation in the professionalism of teachers, and the assumption that all schools should be the same becomes the guide to practice if not to overt belief. Conservative thinking breeds two considerable difficulties:

- Teachers who seek transfers to other schools to gain a superficial stimulus which really helps neither the system, the teacher nor the school.
- The assumption that all schools should be like all others is reinforced.

These effects have been added to by a steady procession through the school of large numbers of contract teachers (i.e. teachers who are employed by the authority to fill short term vacancies). Many of these teachers are more in tune with the school's philosophy than some of the permanent staff because, often, they are convinced that their hope of a new contract depends upon the satisfaction they give to their current school. It is not the same for permanent employees or those contract people who believe their future rests with the personnel officers.

It is common for plans, well-laid in a school, to be aborted by new system restraints or by new regional or head office appointments, which arise after the school has begun to execute its plans. The outcome of these last minute staff changes is often disastrous for the school because people preferred for these jobs are often the change-agents or key people in the school. Their replacements are seldom as vital or as well equipped.

Up to this point, the discussion has given considerable emphasis to people resources—teachers, parents, departmental officers. But there are other constraints upon the principal who wishes to tackle the difficulties associated with educational needs of the locality in which the school is situated.

Finance

Moves toward giving the school greater control of its finances have helped, but they have not gone far enough. Like most systems the central authority tends to want to spend its money in macro-amounts for its own purposes rather than spread the cash about and leave it to the school to decide its use. Yet to achieve its stated aim of giving the school greater autonomy, it is essential that schools do have more control over their cash entitlements. Until relatively large amounts of untied money enter the school fund those who attempt to cope with the financial components of new challenges can only be frustrated.

The demography of an area and the image a school enjoys are the two factors which largely determine the amounts of money that come to a school from its parents. If the school is in a wealthy district and, if it has a good reputation, on both counts it will have a higher income than other schools of its type.

Basically the funds which a government school receives from the two most important sources, government and parents, are per capita amounts. Hence income is closely related to enrolment. Yet essentially the services that must be provided for students with that money will be little different in total for a population of say, 500 students, compared with double that number. For example, the number of units in the library/resource centre is not changed by a decrease in population (all other factors being the same). The area of the grounds remains the same and requires the same level of maintenance. At present prices, the direct fall in income per student for these purposes is about $40 for each one lost from the total enrolment. Over ten years the fall in expendable income for maintenance and development from this source alone will have fallen by approximately $200,000, sufficient to have bought 10,000 books or their equivalent. In the library area alone, in spite of some direct grants and some disproportionately high input from school resources, the book stock of a school with falling enrolments is very likely to have slowly decreased.

The introduction of the government loan book scheme, by which the schools maintained a stock of text-books for loan to students, was a necessary and timely innovation. But as a consequence, funds which would have been used for other things were devoted to the purchase of loan books.

The central point is that income is very sensitive to enrolment yet the recurring costs are not all enrolment based. The costs of maintaining high-cost services, like the library and canteen, are largely independent of enrolment. The effect is made even more serious by the fact that the equipment and facilities need significant amounts of money for maintenance and replacement as well as for normal running costs.

As enrolments fell, Marion was increasingly pressed for funds, but there were often compounding factors which had a considerable influence on our financial needs. The school population was changing (see chapter 11) in ways which required new subjects, and a wider range of texts to accommodate the various intellectual levels of the students. Many of the subjects had to be 'tooled' at school expense and each variation to a syllabus brought with it a set of library and other resource needs.

The new school enrolment contained a larger proportion of poorer people, who received government assistance which was significantly less than the average income from the parents of the paying students. A disproportionately large number of the supported students selected courses which were 'high' cost, e.g. the craft subjects. We determined that their poverty must not curtail the options available to them by not asking them to pay an additional fee for any materials required for the ordinary exigencies of the syllabus.

Then the loan book scheme took no account of the cost of mounting practical subjects. The scheme's viability depended on the re-use of the books for periods of at least three years, (since grants have not kept pace with inflation, the necessary mean life of a book is now nearer to five years). The materials for practical subjects were and are not re-usable so that their costs are always higher (on average, approximately double the cost of a traditional textbook-based subject). Government response to those schools which, like Marion, had the relatively higher expenditure was to make it clear that they thought the decisions to include practical subjects, *however relevant they might be to the students*, were foolish—a neat piece of political ambivalence especially at a time when the schools were being criticised from similar sources for failing to 'produce enough tradesmen'. Almost at the same time as the book-scheme was introduced, the government had forced the issue (I believe properly) by establishing comprehensive high schools as the one kind of secondary school.

Marion established two principles; the first was a principle of parallel development. That is, it was our policy that we would keep each facet of the school developing together, rather than give complete emphasis to one or other development project during any one period. Our second policy principle disconnected income in any one area from its financial needs so that whatever was introduced could be considered for its educational value and not on whether it would support itself financially. Hence desirable high cost areas could be developed without a low cost-high income producing area becoming a pressure point for saving money.

But the art of grantsmanship soon became part of gaining grants. From a positive incentive, it was later to become a source of cynicism. The procedures which had to be followed were demanding and for the most part unproductive. When we examined our own list of 'wins' and 'losses', and the criteria which had been set, we found little to encourage us. At best it was a new way of distributing money through a remote power group who seemed to have little concern for the educational needs of the youngsters in a particular school.

Hindsight also establishes that those proposals which we believed had greatest value had repeatedly failed to gain support—our community language programme was one prominent example, yet a scheme for making rustic furniture out of fruit tree prunings received support. As the years passed the level of investigation of projects decreased.

Earnest Schuttenberg, from Cleveland State University, USA, made a humorous comment which, one suspects might have eased his frustration. Headed 'Grantsmanship : It's the Little Things that Count'. Schuttenberg goes on:

> Getting research funded has become a keenly competitive endeavor. Granting agencies scrutinize each proposal for the marks of excellence that mean the difference between 'Go' and 'No'. A seemingly small item—the project acronym, for example—can often tip the scales.
>
> The research studies listed below, however worthy they may be, are not likely to be funded. I urge the reader to study them carefully and to ponder what modifications would be necessary to improve their chances in the area of grantsmanship.

A selection from his seventeen examples make his point— they could all be applied to the secondary school area in this state:

- Alternative Ways For Useful Learning (AWFUL)
- Building and Using Mnemonic Messages for Excellence in Reading (BUMMER)

- Designing and Reviewing Experimental Grading Systems (DREGS)
- Faculty Learning Opportunity Program (FLOP)
- Learning Opportunities for Underdeveloped and Sheltered Youths (LOUSY)
- New Experiments in Reading Development (NERD)
- Supporting Leadership Opportunities for Principals (SLOP)
- Winning Active Support for Technical Education (WASTE)

It was these circumstances that forced us, during a period of high expenditure on education, to find new and untried sources of finance if we were to be able to establish the programmes that our careful research showed were needed for our youngsters. Neither the parents, fetes and small lotteries, or special grants would solve the problem. The downturn in the economy of the country in the late seventies into the eighties increased the risks involved and made the authorities more determined to curb initiative.

Important Decisions

It soon became clear to us, and overseas observations seemed to confirm it, that government funding in real terms would decrease. Policies like support of independent schools would ultimately dry up some funds which would otherwise have come to the government schools.

Around the western world tax-payers were crying, Enough! Already this phenomenon was borne out by trends which were present in South Australia. Costs such as the maintenance of workshops and minor works, were slowly being transferred to schools. The government set up schemes by which it supplied the labour and the school paid for 85% of the materials, or vice versa, government provided the materials and the school found the labour. Attractive as these arrangements were to many schools, they all added to the school's burden because they replaced services which previously had been fully funded by sources outside the school.

Funding levels from government were nowhere near sufficient from the beginning to meet these additional costs, yet the amounts we received were not keeping up with inflation. The difficulty was being added to as fixed costs were calculated on the basis of enrolment at a time when the number of students was declining.

In response to the pressure created by general policy, Marion first established the idea of a common fee which was levied from all parents (except for those who received government assistance on grounds of poverty, or claimed incapacity to pay). Fortunately, the parents of almost every 'paying' student paid and all but one or two of the parents, at meetings deliberately called to discuss it, supported the concept. After years of hesitation, the approach has been approved by the authorities and it has become general practice among schools but, in earlier years, it was often difficult to meld the school's policy with ministerial directives.

In a number of other ways the school sought funds from sources which were not tied to the enrolment numbers or the parents' pockets. These funds had to be raised in return for services offered by the school. Eventually, to facilitate that operation, it became expedient for the school to employ an 'assistant bursar' who was able to improve our income in spite of the salary commitment. Again we found ourselves in a 'grey' area of Education Department policy but it was necessary if we were to fulfil our obligation to offer our students the curriculum that was best suited to their needs. Notwithstanding the stronger financial state which resulted, the extreme pressures upon us to make every dollar count, ensured that we used our money efficiently.

INFLATION

The effects of inflation upon schools have been far more serious than most people seem to realise. While government grants were raised at lower than the current rate of inflation, the charges for most items purchased out of school funds have inflated at a level considerably above the current mean rate. The inflation figures in the following table were calculated conservatively after the prices of a number of items in each category had been examined.

Table 25

Inflationary Pressure (using 1977 cost base)

Category	% Inflation Rate Year	% Effect 1977-82	Approximate % Rise
Building Supplies (Craft materials)	12–15	75–100	85
Books	15–20	100–250	200
Paper	10–15	60–100	75
Salaries	10–12	60–76	65
Summary — weighted rise in costs at least 100%!			

Table 26 illustrates the additional stress placed upon the school by the number of students from poor homes who receive the government assisted student allowance (free books and some other considerations).

LOANS

To enable the programme of the school to proceed and to reduce the effects of inflation, the school sought a number of small loans. The strategy was a good one, suggested by an Education Department adviser, and supported by the business people on the high school council.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

In an effort to extend its curriculum in the new ways students' needs demanded, Marion established several special projects which combined educational efficacy with financial reward.

Table 26

Fees

Year	Common fee*	Government book loan allowance	Government assisted student allowance	Number on free books
1977	$30	$38	$15	80
1978	$35	$40	$15	85
1979	$40	$40	$15	87
1980	$40	$45	$30	188
1982	$52	$45	$30	238

The amount paid by parents–mean per student–$47 (1982).
Overall mean–$40 per student
*First child in school, others (about 25%) paid less.

Community Clubs

Each week, approximately 220 adult and student clients of community activities were involved principally during the evening hours. Participants paid fees which were used to provide light refreshments, to reimburse the voluntary leaders for their travelling expenses and to compensate office input and running costs (see chapter 9).

Community Contact Centre

The concept of an outlet for artefacts made by students, unemployed local youth, community clubs and other people and institutions, proved to be a successful viable focus of liaison between the school and the community and a regular source of income, with a potential to increase as time went on.

Study Work Programme

This programme, which is described in chapter 19, was established for a small group of students who were keen to have a job, but for various reasons, (of which poor school achievement was seldom one), were unable to find work.

The scheme's life and, more especially, the number who could benefit at any one time depended upon the income the students were able to generate under a manager who also derived his wages from the scheme. As a curriculum item the school budgeted to invest $6,000 out of its funds to 'tool' the programme. Welcome funds for some building extensions and additional tools came from the Education Department, Adelaide Rotary Club, Morialta Trust Fund and a number of donations.

HOLIDAY RECREATION PROGRAMME

The full extent of the community programme was described in chapter 9. The school made no financial gain from this extensive community service. It is included here because it provided the funds to pay the salary of the assistant-bursar for the ten weeks he was involved in the holiday programme.

FOOD AND CATERING

The aim of the course was to provide education in a work experience situation and, at the same time, generate income to offset at least some of the expense of mounting the subject. To establish the subject the school purchased industrial capacity equipment. While the course proved demanding upon staff and resources there was no doubting its educative significance for the students.

CAPE JERVIS CONSERVATION AND STUDY CENTRE

The school developed, with some help from a school commission grant, but mainly from its own human and material resources, a study camp on a 40 hectare bush site 100km away at Cape Jervis. It also purchased a bus to transport students to and from the area and for other field study exercises. While the students who used it paid their expenses, we were able to generate additional income by hiring the facilities to other groups. We were also able to offset some of the maintenance and development costs by scheduling some projects as part of student course work.

ETHNIC SCHOOL FOR COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

The community languages programme operated through the 'Marion Ethnic School for Community Languages' which had been set up by the school to attract government funding (State and Commonwealth) and help us maintain a supply of suitable teachers. Other schools were among the beneficiaries.

Out of the discomfort which the Education Department felt about the school's financial and educational policy, the areas which gave greatest concern were the food and catering enterprise (rather like saying you can have an orchestra, but it must not play in public, lest it be seen to be competing with the South Australian Symphony Orchestra), the community programme, and the staff employed by the school. But the steadfastness of the school and its council and the educational validity of the programmes saved them for the youngsters. In the process the school community had become stronger and better informed, and far less inclined to waver with every political breeze.

Buildings and Grounds

Building policies have been sceptical of local wisdom. Yet the cases of central error make local people no less able to act wisely, especially when they own the project and have to stretch their own resources to achieve full fruition of their aims.

But these localised disagreements are unimportant compared with the broad stategies by which facilities are provided. If enrolments increase against the demographic tide of rapidly decreasing school numbers, as happened at Marion, then there are difficult dilemmas for the Education Department and the school. The Education Department has excess space elsewhere and with building costs spiralling upward it will be loth to erect yet another building. The central authority will also be faced with needs for new schools in new population areas on the outer fringes of the city.

For the school the situation has a different colour. A deliberate decision of the school has introduced a new category of students who significantly add to the small local component of the enrolment. But, if other schools adopt similar policies its intake could shrink. If it controls its enrolment the school may cut off the source of students which saved it in the late seventies and might do again at the end of the eighties.

In the meantime an uneasy tension hangs over the school. At the current intake level the school is short of space. While new curriculum developments and higher proportions of senior students increase the space a school needs, the Education Department struggles with its budget and the political activists who see assets lying idle oppose any increase in capital expenditure. In these circumstances the Education Department adopts space standards which offer lesser entitlements to older areas.

If it were not true that a substantial number of the students would not be at school except for the programme (including its social elements) that is offered, the argument to withhold space would hold some validity. But while there is no mechanism to ensure that the features of the alternative learning environment are replicated elsewhere, the rules concerning buildings tend to work to deny the Education Department's stated policy of providing for students who are not catered for in the extended area which surrounds their homes. Marion is fulfilling that role.

Curriculum

The complex of interacting factors which have already been described all contribute to, and influence, curriculum change. For example, new subjects require special facilities and above average needs for cash to adapt existing rooms for new purposes, to maintain the resource, and, to provide the books, materials and equipment required.

Transition of the buildings and grounds was accomplished at Marion with little internal trauma, but in tension, at times considerable tension, with the Public Buildings Department which, in spite of differences, did much to help. More recently, the school had to find most of the cost of materials before some alterations could be made. Since no extra cash could be expected from central funds, unless we found the money, lack of appropriate rooms would limit the school's educational programme.

To get the money, the school had to use non-traditional methods. All of these departures from the norm placed us under suspicion and excessive scrutiny as the bureaucracy became increasingly nervous about our initiatives. It was easy to explain the problem away by stating that we had extended ourselves too far. Such easy condemnation neatly removed any liability for the students we were rescuing. By 1982 what had been severely criticised only two years before, became general practice.

While it has considerable capacity to tolerate local differences, the central authority becomes extremely sensitive when something appears to go wrong with a school-based innovation. The exaggerated furore that we suffered shows the degree of risk that a school must accept if it decides to tackle those specific challenges which have no traditional solutions.

Every principal has been comforted at times by the relative safety of his protected place within the system. However, those who have sought to use their initiative usually make themselves content to 'blame the system for their shortcomings' while they obediently conform and wait for a remote signal to go ahead, or tire of waiting as the enthusiasm of people around them fades. It is very difficult for a school to be different. Certainly peripheral things can be 'local' but the basic way a school tries to bring about student learning is either controlled by the system or is achieved in spite of system-based constraints.

The Issue

The basic issue is the status given to the principal. Standing as he does between the Education Department and his local people, he must again be made 'undisputed head of his school' with full freedom to act within the broadest constraints of public accountability. The ludicrous situation exists in which the independent education sector is able to act with few restraints and yet gain access to public funds (pro rata) almost equal to those of the government school system. It should not be necessary to risk one's reputation within the system, nor to seek the safety of a committee, to make decisions which many systems insist belong to the principal in the school.

The position of principal has never before carried more responsibility or been more open to public scrutiny, yet their real power to influence the main areas of the educational operation has seldom been less than it is at present. Yet the reality is that there is very little chance of the school making the changes it needs to make unless the principal is willing to risk the consequences of failure, and official rebuke.

What solutions are there?

Selection of staff members by the principals of the schools is practised in many countries which have all the characteristics of geography found in South Australia. The central body has to pay more than lip service to local differences. Politics will tend to bring uniformity in spite of its rhetoric. Policies will appear to emphasise common features far more than differences. More effective consultation and more consideration of the chain effects of a proposal are needed before moves are made by officers outside and intellectually removed from the school.

While I believe there was no real intention to restrict the office of principal, an examination of the long list of items on the agenda of the South Australian High School Principals' Association, like similar lists in other places, soon reveals the extent of the problem. Consistently, as many as twenty items, at any one time, concern matters where decisions have been made by officers away from schools and sometimes outside the education world about things which subsequently affect the task of running the school. Sometimes the changes were made with the primary intention of assisting the school, only to misfire because the decisions were based upon incorrect information.

Although systems can point to considerable change over the last decade there has been little real change to the inside of classrooms. The Marion experience demonstrates how hard it is to bring that about. In days when there is a strong case for change, the Marion story surely challenges system-heads who are the genuine educators (and there are many very competent professionals among them) to give more energy to enabling each school to create the most fertile conditions for change to occur where it matters—in classrooms. More stability, more local accountability and more control over human and material resources are all necessary parts of an environment in which the principal is expected to lead.

These issues do not stop with the administrators of the education system. They belong equally to the social fabric of our society which seems determined to establish the paradox that it demands educational outcomes that cannot be achieved because it insists upon an ever increasing network of constraints which frustrate, if not prevent, initiative. The years ahead are filled with uncertainty that can only be resolved by people who are prepared to take risks. Hopefully school communities will be prepared to applaud their victories, to learn from their failures and not to be quite so quick to belittle or condemn them.

29

EVALUATION

Perspective

However hard one might try to be objective about the results of one's labour, the feeling remains that one might be missing the truth. In this chapter a considerable amount of evidence has been collected together to give support to the claim that the various aims of the school have been achieved. However, before the reader sets out to examine the statistical data which has been gathered, it should be of interest to read a number of accounts of the school which have been provided by people who have had the opportunity to view the school at close quarters and to share the outcomes of a number of investigations of which Marion has been a part.

The school had so many visitors that it was impossible for us to take everyone around: time would not permit that. When we heard that some sceptics were suggesting that we covered a fixed 'safe' route, we hit upon the idea of inviting students, at random, to conduct visitors around the school with the instruction to go 'everywhere' and introduce them to whatever and whoever they wished. That the students knew their school was perhaps one of its achievements. That we were seldom embarrassed, either by the student-guide or by unseemly behaviour in some room, and that the visitors commented upon the obvious pride the students exhibited in their school, was perhaps evidence enough of the success of many of our aims. It was certainly a source of immense satisfaction. Collectively, the items which follow give the reader some appreciation of Marion High School. The comments are unabridged and unaltered in any way. The comments from parents and others, out of many possible examples, give a feel for the school and how well it was received.

> In response to criticism being levelled at Government Schools through the press, I want to tell you that I 'phoned the press and the Minister to tell them how much Marion had done for Alastair after very bad experiences elsewhere.

* * *

> Thankyou for accepting Fiona as a student at Marion for the past 10 weeks. We are very pleased with her progress . . . Fiona has been happy at school as she has been welcomed by teachers and students.

* * *

I greatly appreciated the visit by students from Marion High School. They were extremely enthusiastic and understanding of the children in my class [for intellectually disabled children].

* * *

I would like to say that I deeply appreciated the value of the many things I learnt during my four weeks at Marion High School. It was from not only the courtesy of yourself and the two deputy principals who were so helpful, nor from the wisdom and experience of my supervisors and such teachers as Mr Pepper and Mr Fox, but also from the students themselves that I began to get a taste of how much there is to learn and how satisfying it can be to join the teaching profession. I shall always remember Marion High School as somewhere very special—somewhere where there is room for everyone. I thank you and your staff and students most sincerely.

* * *

One of your students has just spent three day's work experience in the . . . Library of South Australia. I was responsible for organising her programme of work in the South Australian Collection and Newspaper Section and I am writing to tell you how impressed I was by her work and attitude.

She was at all times courteous, willing and determined to make the most of her time in the Library.

It was a pleasure to have her with us.

* * *

We would both like to thank you and your staff for the opportunities you gave Aaron at Marion High School.

During the short time we were involved with the school, we could sincerely recommend it as a school concerned for the welfare of the individual.

* * *

I am writing to congratulate your school on the very enjoyable International Fair that you staged last Sunday.

I thought both the entertainment and the stalls were very well organised. The concept was both enjoyable to those who attended and educational.

Thank you to you, your staff and your pupils.

* * *

Further to my letter of 13th May, 1982, I understand Mrs . . . two sons have been spoken to and this has resulted in considerable improvement in the family atmosphere, and has certainly helped Mrs . . . considerably. As a result, she is now facing her treatment with much greater mental comfort and optimism.

Many thanks for your help and that of your staff.

* * *

> I would like, through you, to thank a group of students who assisted as volunteers at the . . . Special School Holiday Programme. They were invaluable help, quickly building up a rapport with the handicapped children. It was a pleasure to work with such friendly, well-mannered, reliable and capable young people and I hope to see them again during our September programme. I will list their names at the conclusion of this note and hope some commendation can be made at assembly or through reports or references as I believe their help deserves some special mention. I would particularly like to thank . . . who contacted me in reference to the programme and who acted as liason person to the other students. Please pass on my thanks.

Overall we received at least ten supportive letters for each critical letter even in those early days—an unusually high ratio!

A copy of a letter from a disgruntled parent follows. The letter came late in my first year at Marion and it reflects the difficulties we had during the early years. The letter is as I received it except for changes of name and some personal details. Initially an uneasy relationship with these parents grew into one of mutual support during the following year.

It raised several questions about the change process. Basically the letter supported our actions. 'The slides' were part of an attempt to inform parents—the error in their presentation did not help, but the overall outcome was one of appreciation. Speech night was an occasion when we could use a media presentation—our technique improved. Later we introduced a graduation ceremony but examination certificates and detailed result lists were never presented, because we thought that to do so would be in conflict with our broad aims.

> Dear Mr Hannaford,
>
> I am the mother of John who is just finishing his third year in your school. Words just fail me to express my disbelief when John came home from school today to tell us he would not be allowed to do Maths 2 next year. What happens in that school these days I cannot imagine. On Parents' Night his Maths teacher told my husband and I that he was doing well. Now this! Don't the teachers help the children anymore? If he is weak at Maths it is their job to teach him. Not this new way of letting them think they are doing well and then this today. How do the teachers know anyway. From what John tells us they just have a few little tasks and no exams so I don't think the teachers know how the children are getting on with their Maths or any other subject for that matter. And another thing he doesn't have much homework. His elder brother and sister used to be sitting up at all hours trying to finish their homework but John hardly has any. I admit that sometimes he spends hours and hours at a Geography project but what he learns doing that I don't know.
>
> You have not met Robert and Josephine. They left school before you came. They both matriculated at Marion—Robert is working as an engineer with his father's firm and Josephine will finish her Arts degree this year. Josey matriculated in 1973. Imagine, if you can, our disillusionment when we went to Speech night in 1974 to have those silly slides dished up to us (in the wrong order!) and not a word about the kids who had matriculated the year before.
>
> Now my husband and I want John to be an engineer like his father and brother and as you must know he must have his Maths. I know John wants to go to Uni. too to do Engineering like his brother. When we came home from that Speech Night (your first and I only wish it had been the last) my husband said, 'That is the last

time I am going to that school', but it is true that we go to the Parents' nights to see his teachers and try to find out how he is getting on.

I hope there won't be any more fuss about John wanting to do Maths 2. If there is I suppose I will have to take the matter further but I don't like rows and I hope this letter tells you that at least 2 parents are not satisfied with what is going on at Marion.

And don't suggest that he go to another school! Marion is our school more than yours. All we want is a return to the old standards instead of all this reading books (I know they have to do English), enrichment and trips to camps and other places.
Yours faithfully,

[My postcript: John was pleased not to do Maths 2. He matriculated in Arts and entered a career as a teacher].

The following sample from among many letters of appreciation is heartwarming and can be viewed as evidence of the school's attention to the fulfilment of many of its objectives.

Re: Position—Marketing Clerk— . . . Australia Ltd.
Please accept my thanks for your co-operation in drawing the attention of your students to the vacancy occurring in the above position.

I have been very impressed by the calibre of the students who attended the interview and I sincerely regret that there is only one position vacant at this stage. The successful applicant was one of three quite outstanding young people and it was a most difficult decision to make.

In view of the excellent characteristics of the applicants, I would have no hesitation in contacting your school again should any further vacancies arise.

Again, my thanks for your co-operation.

* * *

I feel Marion High School prepared me very well for work in the respects of interviews and work skills. I got this job at the Hospital on my first interview and I am thankful to the school for preparing me with the proper clerical skills. The only improvement I can see in schools is the continuation of clerical skills at school and perhaps the introduction of Pitmanscript or Pitman 2000 to all levels. This would help students greatly with library notes for assignments and later on for lectures and *all* kinds of office work.

However, to the reader, unsolicited assessments from other educators may be more interesting.

As usual, my visit to Marion High was a matter for inspiration and rejoicing! I returned to the office on cloud 9 because there is no doubt in my mind that what you have going with the work scheme is seminal.

Thanks again for a most enjoyable and indeed inspiring afternoon.

* * *

A brief note to express my most grateful thanks for the splendid effort the school put on to receive the Mayor of . . . and the Town Clerk. I know both gentlemen were very much impressed and, for my part, both gentlemen now have a far better appreciation of what transition education may mean in the secondary school. My only problem, of course, is that what you are doing so very well is by no means typical throughout the State.

* * *

Marion High School: My Impressions—

First impressions: One is assailed by a variety of stimuli, of a great complexity and divergence, if one has the opportunity of spending any time in Marion High School. Some of these, in no particular order, for I am certain that different people respond in a different manner and to a different degree, are the number of people of all ages and sexes, quietly moving about the school, relaxed but yet with a sense of purpose and satisfaction. Nowhere did I get that sense of heavy authoritarian structures nor, more particularly, the need for it.

During my second visit to Marion, I had brought a party of teachers to meet the students and staff as well as to look around the school. To our small party, we had two senior students assigned. The time set aside was not enough—for two reasons—the variety available in the school and the sheer involvement of the students in their own school. I recall reflecting that the two students must have carried out the 'guided tour' exercise on many occasions in order to have had such a detailed working knowledge of their school. On our return to the front foyer of the main building—40 minutes overdue and having spent the last 30 minutes hurrying, I was surprised to hear Brian Hannaford thank the two students and enquire as to how they had handled their first guided tour of their school at 30 minutes notice. Only students who care and identify with their school could have performed as those two students had.

What had I seen and understood? Certainly I had seen a great deal. I also understood that it was a school in which involvement and commitment were essential commodities—that they were even generated by the nature of the school in people who were perhaps by nature not given to such extremes. There is no reason to detail the particular programmes—Mawson, C.Y.S.S., Work-Study, the voluntary adult programme of evening classes and so on. Clearly there is room for each student to negotiate their future by finding a place, a programme, a sense of caring and involvement within the school curriculum which meets their needs to a reasonable degree. If there weren't and the need was legitimate, then I suspect steps would be taken to rectify the need.

All of this above, of course, is very impressive. However, what is more impressive is, if one takes the time to reflect on all of this variety, the total spectrum of the school—its programmes—the people involved, then certain points emerge quite clearly. These are:

- it is a school that is in tune with its times—perhaps it is slightly ahead;
- it is a school that bears the imprint of a design—it has a clear conceptual basis, it is a design that is relevant on both educational and social terms;
- it is a school that is prepared to recognize and face up to change. Its current programmes to cope with youth unemployment bear witness to this.

* * *

Wednesday:
This day I spent at Marion High School. Mr Brian Hannaford, the principal, met me at the school at 9.30 a.m. and spent about half-an-hour explaining his aims, objectives and methods, which are not strictly O.D. [Organisational Development Theory] but are based on the same humanistic philosophy. He then arranged for a student to conduct me around the school telling me to be sure to ask questions of any of his staff whom I wished to question, and after that, interviews with one of his deputies and one of his senior teachers. From about 2 to 3.30 p.m. he collected a panel of six of his senior staff and himself, to answer my questions and explain their objectives and methods. One of his deputies drove me to my hotel, and we continued the discussion.

At Marion High I was on familiar ground, and Marion High was an experience that I shall long remember, more than an experience, an inspiration. Again I was confronted with an enthusiastic and united staff who put far more into their work than they can in any sense be obliged to do, and get far more out of it in terms of job satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. Student-staff relations were, to me, extraordinary. The students were orderly and purposeful, friendly, at ease and obviously proud of their school. Besides the year 11 girl who conducted me around the school the twenty or so other students to whom I spoke, either during that tour or during lunch break, when I mingled with students in the grounds, all seemed excellent examples of what high school students should be like. Where did they hide the others? Even more extraordinary was the policy of having no restriction on the movements of students before school or during recess in that any student is permitted to enter and eat or read or study or play or converse in any classroom. The rooms are tidy, the grounds almost spotless, and I could find no evidence of vandalism, not even names or other writing on desks. Students seemed free to seek staff without restriction—a few students even entered the staff room during lunch break to speak to staff members without being embarassed or causing annoyance. It is obviously not a 'them' and 'us' situation.

Historically, I was told, Marion was an elitist school for the academically gifted. When the South Australian Education Department went comprehensive and schools were given districts, Marion High found itself with a largely light industrial area and a student body either trade oriented or largely disoriented, and rapidly acquired a poor reputation, with much vandalism and absenteeism. Four years ago Brian Hannaford became principal and set about reorganising the school. He does not use O.D.—in fact he was the only member of the staff to whom I spoke who knew what O.D. is, but he uses some O.D. techniques and some of his own based on the same humanistic philosophy of management. The school publication 'Moving into the Future' gives a detailed outline of their organisation, and the key word is 'participation'. He does involve his staff as much as possible in decision making, but I think he and his seniors are more directed than O.D theory would approve. I asked his senior staff whether the committees sought consensus, and they laughed at the idea as being too time consuming and inefficient. Besides general staff and faculty meetings, the Marion High staff are involved in a pastoral care committee, a year co-ordinator's committee, and a number of special projects committees, an academic committee and any number of ad hoc committees—formed as need dictates. (They seem to have omitted a committee for designing horses!) There is also a management committee, consisting of senior staff and all others with responsibility for other staff—about half their total staff are on the management committee, which seems to correspond in function to . . . High School's Seniors Meeting. Unlike O.D.

> committees, these committees make recommendations to the appropriate senior or to the management committee or the principal rather than making firm decisions, although I believe that committee decisions are usually confirmed and acted upon. Everyone to whom I spoke considered this the best arrangement.
>
> The successes that Marion High's staff are most proud of are certainly impressive. They run a special programme for youth with no academic or trade interest in school who would normally drop out from High school, and probably from society. These youths ('students' they are not) spend half their time at normal classes, with students of comparable ability and achievement (they run five 'streams' to cater for various ability and achievement levels) and half their time at such activities as canoe building, motor mechanics of a very practical type, building a huge electrical model train display, gardening, etc., according to their interest. Mr Hannaford and his deputies expressed themselves as delighted with the improvement in the attitude and behaviour of this very difficult section of their enrolment. Their other success, one which I find as difficult to believe, is about 80% parent participation in at least one or other of the schools' many activities that involve parents. For a State High School this must rate inclusion in Guiness Book of Records! This is even more impressive when it is realised that most of their parents fall within the lower socio-economic levels whose members normally avoid such participation. In fact they have a very large proportion of New Australians especially Italian and Greek, but also over twenty other nationalities.
>
> Space and time preclude me from detailing everything worthy of note. I advise anyone who can to visit this outstanding school and learn first hand. In summary 'participation' is the key word, the school is pupil centred and the student-staff rapport the best I have observed in any high school. Would they do better with a strictly O.D. programme? I doubt it, but I suspect that much of their success is due to the charisma of the principal, and O.D. might be a good way for other staffs to seek the same goals.
>
> [Signed]
> [Principal of an Independent School]

* * *

> On behalf of the . . . School Study Group, I wish to thank you and your staff for all the time and care you took in planning our visit to your school. Of all the schools we visited, your school impressed us the most.
>
> I have spent my whole time since returning, talking to our subject masters and teachers on different aspects of your community involvement. They have all indicated considerable interest and I feel certain that we can implement many of your programmes.

Professor John Eggleston, University of Keele, England visited Marion in 1980. He came for an hour and stayed much longer. As a result, he included a chapter about Marion in his book *Work Experience in Secondary Schools* (1982, pp.109 - 120) along with seven other examples of what he considered to be outstanding contributions to the problems of entering work, drawn from Britain, Wales, Ireland and USSR.

Evaluation

1 *Work-study programme*

From the report of the central region of the Education Department concerning school furniture, 1982, p.5:

Inappropriate design and poor quality construction of desks and chairs were the two problems most emphasised by the administrators whose comments were sought. Most could relate several stories associated with this problem e.g. desk tops which have come adrift from new desks whilst being unloaded from a P.B.D. delivery truck or whilst being carried to the classrooms or new chairs collapsing at first use. Scathing comments were made about quality control at manufacturing level. Are E.D. specifications being met? (or being checked?) Not one school contacted was satisfied with the general quality of students' desks and chairs used in secondary schools. A number of administrators commented on the fact that desks and chairs renovated under the Marion High School project or P.B.D. Visiting Tradesmens' Scheme rarely suffered these problems. In fact after repair, desks and chairs seemed far stronger than at the time of manufacture.

2 *From Parents*

Questionnaire—1977

A simple questionnaire was sent home early in 1977. Altogether 662 families returned completed copies, out of a possible 700.

About half of the respondents chose to make a comment but they were so varied that generalisations were impossible. We replied to them all by circular as follows:

> Thankyou for your constructive comment at the bottom of the questionnaire. After careful consideration by all parties we find that:
>
> - it is not practicable to make the changes
> - we are unable to find the staff suitably qualified
> - there are insufficient students interested
> - your suggestion will be implemented as soon as possible.
>
> Whatever the outcome, we are grateful for your interest. We hope you will feel free to make suggestions or comments at any time.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> *Principal*

The questionnaire appeared to have been clear except for the use of the word 'friendly' in question 7. Many read this word as an indicator of laxness, poor discipline or shabby standards. Of course we saw it as a precursor to learning, and as a pre-requisite to rigour, student participation in learning and self-disciplined study.

With few exceptions the suggestions of parents were in line with our policy so that one way or another their need would be met. If we could not accept a suggestion, a brief set of reasons was supplied in the form of a hand written postscript. Not unnaturally a handful of the comments showed a desire for the return of 'the good old days', but the majority of parents were forward looking. Overall they reflected the wide range of students we were trying to cater for.

Figure 41.

Questionnaire	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	None of these
1. I feel I understand the overall programme of the school	502	124	27	9
2. I believe that most staff are concerned for my child's welfare	545	80	25	13
3. I am happy with the range of subjects and subjects offered	578	61	19	4
4. I understand the levelling arrangements.	475	140	30	17
5. I feel free to come to the school at any time to discuss matters with teachers.	558	71	28	5
6. There is an adequate opportunity to meet with teachers	483	132	32	15
7. The school has a friendly atmosphere	504	127	21	9
8. I am quite happy with what Marion High is doing with my child	533	84	20	25

9 Add any comment you feel will be of use (e.g. Suggestion, encouragement, criticism, approval).

(Sign if you wish)

Thank you for your help.

More specifically there was a need to continue to explain the assessment arrangements, especially as they related to levelling, and to persist with and try to create more opportunities for parents to meet with the staff. The questionnaire proved to be a good starting platform for the coffee nights which were held later in the term and to justify 'visiting' time for parents on two mornings each month.

About 35% of parents attend one or more coffee nights during Term 1. Over 80% of parents attend to collect their child's reports and discuss progress with teachers during Term 2 each year.

Approximately 200 parents give voluntary services to the school for at least 2 hours per week for one term, and the number is increasing each year.

3 *Research project*

The School Leavers Project examined post-school experiences of young people and their perceptions of their schooling

> Three schools were chosen as having a variety of intensive career education programmes. Each of these schools was paired with a school offering career education counselling of a more traditional kind, and located nearby, so that employment opportunities were similar. (Delin Report—*School Leavers Project*—1979, p.1)

Employment Outcomes for Career Education and non-Career Education Schools.

Table 27

School	Marion High School	Employment Rate (%) –1978
A	7.4	71
B	8.5	68
C	8.8	64
Marion	9.1	69
E	9.6	64
F	10.7	56

*Low SES is high in income and status

It can be seen that Marion High School leavers were employed at a higher rate than might have been expected from their socio-economic level.

> Employment rates for those entering the workforce (excluding full time students) correspond closely with socio-economic status—with one exception (Marion High School). The table gives an indication of the socio-economic status (SES) of leavers from the schools and the employment rates for comparison. (Delin, p.21)

Other data from the questionnaires (sent out in connection with the project)—only items in which Marion was different from the other schools are quoted:
Ability to complete the questionnaire:

Table 28

	Marion High School	Overall
Inadequate	2	4
Adequate	8	19
Good	90	77

School provision to provide information:
% who found item useful.

Table 29

	Marion High School	Overall
Pamphlets	83	80
Work Experience	74	39
Work Observation	55	32
C.E.S.	62	60
Counsellors	69	65
Career Education	58	48

Teacher Ratings of Academic Potential:

Table 30

Rating	1	2	3
Year 10	Year 11 PEB subjects	Year 11 non-PEB	Leave school
Year 11	Year 12 PEB Matriculation	Year 12 SSC	Leave school
Year 12	Tertiary subjects	Tertiary subjects	Look for work

LEAVERS as percentage of those classified 1,2,3:

Table 31

Year	School	1	2	3
10	Marion	1.0	5.6	10
	Overall	4.8	7.1	18
11	Marion	6.7	37	48
	Overall	13	43	39

46% of the Marion group were deemed capable of matriculation by the staff. Actually 43% of the original year 8 group took the examination at end of the following year. (c.f. adjusted state norm for Marion was about 27%, i.e. the staff reflected confidence in 19% more students than the State figure for a group with the same spread of competence.

4 *Case Study*

This case study was prepared by Brigitte Bleys for Directorate of Educational Facilities, in 1979. It was presented to the OECD Programme for Educational Buildings, centered in Paris, France.

> Marion High appears to have evolved through three fairly distinct phases which may well be applicable to most neighbourhood secondary schools.
>
> From 1955 to 1965 the school expanded in almost every field. In this *expansion* phase, enrolments climbed rapidly to approximately 1,800. The range of general and specialist facilities increased and very significant increases occurred in the numbers of professional and para-professional staff. At its peak, the large school population made fund-raising relatively easy. This led to the purchase of a country campsite and a fully established library and audio-visual resource centre. It further enabled the employment of such extra ancillary staff as groundsmen to maintain its several sports fields. On the educational side, the relatively large numbers of students from a wide range of socio-economic levels permitted the school to establish a high reputation for academic success over a broad spectrum of subject areas. Attainments in sport, drama and music were high.
>
> The second phase began as enrolments declined. The reputation of the school in both academic and extra-curricular activities became more difficult to sustain. As the nature and extent of the parent community altered, fund-raising became progressively harder. As student numbers declined still further, the school lost key teaching and ancillary staff and the range of curriculum offerings shrank. The traditional aims and purposes of Marion High School became difficult to attain and the school lost prestige. This second phase of general *decline* was arrested in 1974 when, with a change of principal, the school began to reshape its philosophy and take on a new set of aims and purposes.

> The third phase of redefinition is now operational. Although the number of secondary age students continues to decline (though more slowly), the total student population is in fact *increasing* as community/adult education programmes are established. The human resources for learning are also increasing as the curriculum range is widened, and surplus facilities are used to accommodate curriculum teams, community liaison officers and project groups. (p.16)

5 *Marion High School Community Programme*

Community Clubs (10 week term)

Table 32

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Term 1 enrolment	112	350	460	355	418
Term 1 attendance	85	242	330	340	350
Number of activities	12	23	44	56	56

Unfortunately this programme had to be curtailed through lack of financial support from State and Local Government sources. Many supportive letters were received from the public and bodies such as 'Clovelly Park Community Health Centre', 'Marion Community Development Board', 'Marion Parish (Uniting Church in Australia)', and Mr Ron Payne (Member for Mitchell).

It was possible to continue and to extend the recreational programme which provided holiday support to over 500 children and adolescents for 8 weeks of each year.

These and other community programmes not only enabled the school to give support to the area, but helped the school establish itself as a school serving its community.

6 *Multicultural Programme*

One aim of the school is 'to develop attitudes of understanding and concern for other people, to learn about people, and, by being among them, to care for some of them'. An emergent programme was to have as one of its elements an 'appreciation of ethnic cultures as a source of enrichment for the whole community'.

Various assessments of the programme note:

- Increasing numbers of ethnic people have chosen to enrol at Marion.
- The school is a 'multicultural school, not a school with many cultures'.
- The subject language approach (i.e. assistance with the English language as it is needed during a study of each subject) has led to higher performances general experience around the State would expect from measures of the general competence in English of the same students.
- Freedom from racial tension (very surprising to many observers who work in multicultural environments).

The Prize List names are instructive (e.g. 1980), for about 45% of students at this level are from non-English speaking families.

- Special Prizes

Dux of the School:	Tung, Yew Yee
Proxime Accessit:	Lau, Chin Man
Most Consistent Secondary School Certificate:	Vatsilas, Sandy
Most Consistent Internal and Secondary School Certificate:	Gooden, Michael
Citizenship (Rotary):	Edwards, Terina
Citizenship (Bank of N.S.W.):	Favretto, Robert
ICL Computer Science Award:	Darzins, David

- Public Examination Board Subject Prizes

English	Parsons, Michael
Mathematics	Tung, Yew Yee
Mathematics 2	Low, Boo Tean
Mathematics 1s	Lau, Chin Man
Chemistry	Tung, Yew Yee
Physics	Tung, Yew Yee
Biology	Lau, Chin Man & Chin, Saun Sin
Geology	Anderson, Ian
Geography	Anderson, Ian
Economics	Loo, Lee Lian
Classical Studies	Brittain, Julia
French	Nguyen, Mira
German	Darzins, David
Russian	Lisova, Antonina
Italian	Favretto, Robert
Modern Greek	Kourou, Katrina
Malaysian	Nordin, Nazleena
Vietnamese	Nguyen, Mira
Chinese	Yan, Kian Seck
Australian History	Pfitzner, Adrienne
Modern European History	Garrard, Sue
American History	Loo, Lee Lian
Art	Wang, Mei Ling
Music	Brittain, Julia

- Secondary School Certificate Subject Prizes

English	Vatsilas, Sandy
Australian History	Raptis, John
Australian Economics	Rosser Lisa
Social Science	Rosser, Lisa
Home Economics	Vatsilas, Sandy
Biology	Gastaldo, Dennis
Art	Vatsilas, Sandy
Technical Studies	Gooden, Michael
Business Mathematics	Williams, David
Design	Raptis, John
Contemporary World History	Kavanagh, David

- Internal Subject Prizes

Applied Science	Gooden, Michael
Business Mathematics	Cleggett, John
Commercial Studies	Gooden, Michael & Pascoe, Janet
Industrial Mathematics	Gooden, Michael
Commercial Typing	De Yound, Meredith
Special Physical Education	Gastaldo, Dennis
English as a second language	Tung, Nguyen

Head Prefect's Address

It is fitting to conclude this section with a head prefect's (Kay Duffield's) address on speech night (1980). This speech, like all others presented by students, was not vetted beforehand.

> Last night I sat at my desk searching for a topic to speak about tonight. What could I say that hadn't been said by head prefects of other years? How could I sum up my thoughts and feelings of five years of my life in two minutes. I could tell you about what a great school this is, and how helpful and supportive the staff are, but as you have all been involved with the school in some way you are already aware of this. I could tell you about how I came from a small country town at thirteen, boarding away from home, and had to make my way around a school that seemed massive and full of more strange faces than there are people in my home town; but this too seems inappropriate as I am only one student out of a thousand. Yet I guess this is what Marion High School is about. Each person is treated as an individual with special tastes and interests. Special programmes are made up to accommodate the students' individual needs.
>
> Unfortunately the Public Examinations Board doesn't operate this way. For the next three weeks I have been converted from Kay Duffield to number S4037L. I am expected to reel off what it has taken me five years to learn in a series of three hour exams. These will determine my future, regardless of how I have worked through the other twelve years of my school career. In January I will receive a mark which bears no significance on my character or the effort I put in this year, but rather illustrates how I can perform under pressure and what a machine feeds out after juggling my mark against the rest of the state. Thankfully Marion High School sees each one of us as a person and treats us as such.
>
> For four years I have been sitting on the opposite side of the fence where you are all sitting tonight. I have listened to the speeches of past head prefects and thought how corny, but now that I am in their position I realize that what they said came from the heart. Although I am sure that at some time during the year everyone of us have said that we can't wait to leave this place, through frustrations with our work or whatever, suddenly when you realize that you only have a few days of security left you get a funny feeling in the bottom of your stomach. You spend time reminiscing about earlier years and wonder what your friends will be doing in ten years time. In a few weeks I will have to undergo a change from a student whose biggest decision was what colour sandshoes to wear, to an adult deciding on my future.

> I can sincerely say that the best thing I have gained from my five years at Marion High School are my friends and I thank my parents for giving me the opportunity to meet such a fantastic group of people. Although we leave crying promises to keep in touch we all know deep down that as we embark on a new part of our lives we leave a lot of our school friends behind—but not the memories.
>
> As the times are changing the need for a prefect body as such is diminishing and it is time to look for a more appropriate alternative such as a student representative council. However I have enjoyed my year as head prefect and thank Mrs Duthy, Mr Davis and the 1981 prefects for the great effort they put in this year and wish the eleventh years all the best for next year.
>
> To the staff and especially the librarians who have had to tolerate a lot with the year 12s in their independent study lessons, thank you for the challenge and support you gave us.
>
> To the year 12 students good-bye and good luck, and if anyone is in Flin Flon next year, please look me up because I am going to miss you all. [Kay went to Canada the next year as an exchange student.]

The prefects of the school were elected by the senior students through a series of ballots. The prefects appointed their own leaders. Hence 'prefect' was a misnomer which arose out of the school's history, but had its meaning modified as the years passed. The term 'prefect' was dropped and a student representative council, with its own specific structures and procedures, was established in 1985.

Indicators of Success

The thrust of this book has been about creating the conditions for students of any intellectual calibre to learn and to want to learn. Thus the most likely hard-data to support this contention will be those figures which show the trend of enrolments (against demographic predictions), and retention rates which both suggest that the students liked being in the school. If against those trends we find performance ratings which are equal or better, then it must indicate that the students who stay on, have been more inclined to learn. The latter evidence can be gained from the year 12 examination results which reflect the performances of the students.

One's judgement may be coloured by system trends over the review period in such elements as staffing ratios (higher), enrolment level (lower), ancillary staff support (higher) and teaching time (lower) (see previous chapters). I am unable to provide evidence of the effects of these changes upon performance, but the reader may come from a school where it is likely that the same trends are true, yet performance has dropped, or alienation is higher, neither of which applies at Marion. The information which follows is provided to assist in that judgement. We do it knowing that it is far more likely than not, that the comparison will be in our favour.

General Statistical Data—Marion High School

Table 33.

Enrolment

Year	Year 8	Year 9	Total
1972	382	191	1690
1973	332	222	1661
1974	314	214	1527
1975	247	279	1461
1976	201	242	1243
1977	205	218	1125
1978	185	229	1064
1979	177	209	1003
1980	201	172	989
1981	180	195	994
1982	192	190	1027
1983	213	206	1116

Table 34

Retention—1978 to 1982, 185 enrolled in 1978.

Enrolled in	Year 12, 1982	Total	% Retained
1978 (year 8)	110	110	60
1979 (year 9)	6	116	63
1980 (year 10)	6	122	66
1981 (year 11)	19	141	76
1982 (year 12)	90	231	125

Note The enrolment was higher than predicted because year 8 retention was abnormally high and a large number of students were accepted after year 8.

Students Enrolled by M.H.S. from other Secondary Schools - 1978 - 1981

Table 35

	1978	1979	1980	1981
Year 9	15	23	23	38
from overseas	1	3	1	7
Year 10	22	28	26	36
from overseas	6	4	4	6
Year 11	25	42	40	48
from overseas	1	4	3	12
Year 12	33	58	58	40
from overseas	15	6	18	30
Total	118	168	173	217

Students Enrolled by M.H.S. from Other Schools - 1982

Table 36

Year	Before 28 February	After 28 February	Total
8	192	8	200
9	18	19	37
10	28	16	44
11	41	11	52
12	88	2	90
Total	367	56	423

Table 37

Staffing

Year	Number of Teachers	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
1974	96.0	15.9
1977	80.2	14.2
1979	74.3	13.5
1981	76.5	13.0
1983	87.3	12.8

Principal Function of Staff—1983

Admininistration: 6.0 (including Seniors-0.2 each)
Support Services: 13.5 (Learning Centre)
Classroom: 67.8 (78%)
TOTAL: 87.3

Table 38

Support (Ancillary) Staff—1983

Funding	Hours/week	Comment
Education Department	534	46.5 increase (higher enrolment)
Other Government	80	Special projects
Education Department	4	Hourly paid Speech Therapy
High School Council	163	Approximate some on commission

Table 39

Class Size—1983

Year	< 15†	15–20	21–30	>30	Median Size
Year 8	5*	11	51	–	22.2
Year 9	–	15	42	3	22.8
Year 10	12	17	43	4	24.9
Year 11	13	11	42	1	20.4
Year 12	21	13	30	6	18.4
Total	51	67	208	14	22

† Number of students
* Number of classes in each category

Movement of Year 12 Students During 1981

Enrolled during the year	5
Left to employment during the year	49
Sat Matriculation	101
Sat Non-Matriculation	45
Total	200

Organizations Supplementing the Marion High School Programme

The South Australian Education Department
The Department of Community Welfare
The Marion City Council
The Mitcham City Council
The Youth Advisory Council of Australia
The South Australian Community Recreation Association
Commonwealth Employment Service
The South Australian Women's Keep Fit Association
The South Australian Art Gallery
The South Australian Museum
Sturt College of Advanced Education
Flinders University of South Australia
Panorama Technical College

Local Primary Schools
The Waite Agricultural Institute
Minda Home
Bedford Industries
Orana (Div. of Intellectually Disabled Children's Assoc.)
Sturt Special School
Adelaide Rotary Club
Marion Rotary Club
South Australian Museum
St. Anne's School
Suneden School
Ashford Special School

Table 40

Subjects Offered—1982

Year	Full Year * Number	Semester * Number	Enrichment term or Half term number
8	15	–	4
9	18	–	6
10	21	–	35
11	34	23	44
12	22 PEB 17 SSC 7 INT 22 INT#	17#	46

PEB Public Examination Board
SSC Secondary School Certificate
INT Internal Examination

* Usually offered at 5 levels (except 3 levels at year 12 for full range — see chapter 7): the number of classes (students) determines the number of levels in each class.

We regard 31 as maximum size if one level only; 23 as maximum size if multi-level.

Ethnic Languages are not included (13 offered by Marion Ethnic School for Community Languages and several others recognized and studied elsewhere).

• Also offered to year 11.

Performance at Year 12

Table 41

Year	% intake	Matriculation		% grade A	S.S.C.		Internal		Hybrid
		% matric	% subj passed		% intake	% subj passed	% intake	% subj passed	% intake
1974	42	48	69	7.5					
1977	38	61	82	11	11	67			6*
1979	38 (43)	64 (71)	84 (88)	(16)	(11)	(74)	(5)	(68)	13*
1981	43 (49)	78 (81)	85 (90)	(27)	(14)	(78)	(8)	(82)	11*

State Norms (1974 - 1981)

% to Matriculation = 25 - 27%
of these % who Matriculate = 56 - 64%
% 'A' grading = 9 - 10%

30

THE FUTURE ?

He is a brave and probably foolish person who tries to anticipate the future of a school. Whatever one might wish to write must be qualified with all manner of 'ifs' about a whole range of factors. But the immediate future of Marion High School is a little more certain because the enrolment trend is continuing upwards. That fact alone suggests that the school will be around for a decade at least.

The appointment of my successor ensured continuity. Mr M. Woollacott shares my basic philosophy and he has a strong conviction that it should be preserved. A revision of the working document of the school—the sixth edition of 'Moving into the Future'—is a refreshing document in which the learning needs of all youngsters are given even greater prominence. It takes my paper about success orientation as a base upon which the aims and objectives of the school (unchanged) must be interpreted. The document then describes a range of programmes which are specially designed to overcome various learning difficulties.

New Initiatives

There are several new initiatives which arise out of the old theme:

- Learning difficulties are to be tackled on an individual, as well as a class basis. So long as the principles which surround levelling are not eroded and the practical limitations of individual help are recognised, the movement can only lead to better opportunities for students.
- A significantly large group of physically handicapped students is now established in the school. The group is large enough for them to affect staff and student attitudes and a number of programmes.
- Both the number of part-time students, and the number of students who have returned to study after an interval of months or years, is increasing.
- A review of student learning has created an interest in work required assessment. There is really nothing new in this move, and on its own it is surrounded by the old problems of level, standard, building a body of knowledge and skills, motivation, methodology and assessment procedures. But from a positive perspective, it promises a further lift in concern for these fundamentals of student learning.

The danger of placing all of the hopes of teachers on student commitment to content remains. Many of the exciting examples of this approach to be found around the country, concern groups of students who have not been successful in academic failure-oriented schools. For these students the alternative approach, alone, has brought a release from frustration, and a level of intellectual demand and relevance of content that has been both refreshing and different. But those outcomes cannot be translated across a school unless the tenets of rigour, appropriate intellectual challenge, and upward mobility into more intellectual levels as students grow in capacity, are addressed by teachers who are prepared to take students into a variety of active modes of learning. I have observed such classes where students have been left almost alone to fulfil their learning contract using traditional methods but without much evidence of teacher intervention or guidance beyond the written statements of the assignment. Invariably these groups lacked fire, and their productivity fell well below their potential. It is *not* sufficient to note that their learning levels, though still poor, are better, and that they are less angry than they were before the plan was introduced. However, Marion is well placed to use the trend and its strengths to enrich and revitalise what has been basic to the school's contribution to educational practice in recent years. Perhaps its greatest value will come from a change in those teachers who have been slow to recognise that students in year 10 and upward are young adults who respond best when relationships allow them to make decisions about what they will study, and permit them to pursue mature age behaviour patterns.

Old Strengths

The confidence that has been built up during the last decade, can provide the will to expand ideas to meet new demands.

- The school is continuing to consult parents and students. It is faced by the problems of reconciling aspirations and reality, and of interpreting less articulate opinions. It needs to differentiate between conservatism based on revisionist tendencies and genuine affirmation of past practice. It needs to encourage the promotion of new initiatives and judgements made by teachers, students and parents which do not reflect deeply entrenched prejudices about such matters as academic and subject status, forms of assessment, and classroom methodology. While it is difficult to keep perspective among conflicting views, the commitment of the school to successful outcomes for all who want to stay for the full five years of secondary education is definitely strong enough to protect the central attraction of the programme.
- The 'learning resource centre' concept offers some protection. The various parts assume student ownership of their learning and the probability that each one will have access to help in whatever form it is needed. It supports a campus approach with students. There, young adults can accept their new and growing maturity unhindered, yet they can be upheld by a group within a strong identifiable structure ready at hand and concerned to foster excellence in all endeavours.
- The concept of excellence is gaining in richness. No longer limited to unachievable (for most) remote academic goals it has the challenge of the achievable for every student in whatever fields and at whatever level the child might seek it. Thus intrinsic reward can be a reality.

Restraints

The school continues to face two considerable restraints.

The first is that teachers are appointed without concern for the special aims of the school.

Keenness to get a city appointment nearby to a proposed home address, leads *some* to pay lip service to the school's aims in order to gain the appointment. Among these people are those who want their next school to have the form and even the problems of their previous appointment and lack any desire to change themselves in order to meet the expectations, social setting and educational needs of the students of their new school. These people will always find a few 'doormat' objectors among the existing staff to share their 'phoney' hopes, whose reality is often tarnished by academic arrogance, personal professional deficiencies, or failure to identify their own failures within themselves. There does not seem to be any hope for a better future in this regard because unions ignore personal quality and tacitly assume that the reputation of a school cannot be based upon the quality of the programme it offers, or the congruence of the staff with the school's approach to what it presents. In this way years of earnest and markedly effective endeavour can be jeopardised in a few months through a succession of inappropriate appointments.

The second restraint is that the assumption that some schools can stay academic and old fashioned, while others bear the burden of change, is breaking down—or is it? Maybe the processes which are moulding old-fashioned independent schools will add to the pressures as government schools take the unrealistic course of trying to ape the forms of the new socially elite 'low cost independent schools' (low cost because they receive government funding) which, behind the rhetoric, seem to have no other aim than to preserve middle-class elitism for a group of people who find the fees at older independent schools too high.

Will the Participation and Equity programme which seems to place its confidence in change, grounded in the mass of teachers, students and parents, help or mar? History reveals few innovations of value that have followed that course. While school-based approaches are most likely to succeed, at the stage of implementation it still takes strong men and women to implement *real* change. These pressures are not absent from the Marion scene. On balance the future looks to be promising. New needs are being identified and addressed in an integrated setting which is comfortable and acceptable yet challenges the student to find identity and success.

Other Concerns

One still hears much about schools having the responsibility to find jobs for their students. The vocational argument remains strong, yet more now than ever before it must be balanced by commitment to social considerations and leisure pursuits which might also foster the kind of self-development which can be vocationally vital in an uncertain future. Marion's approach to choice and celebration make it strong in this area.

What of the culture? Will the school become a place where students, year 10 and older, move about as on a 'tertiary-like' campus? Where the system of checks is more in line with adult institutions? Where school services provide on the spot responses to student requests for help in areas of their work which were previously the zealously protected domain of the classroom?

Will the students from 14 years of age upwards spend less time in the formal classroom and more time in the general setting of informal support forms? People like J.I. Goodlad (1984) in America are suggesting a reduction in classroom time for each subject from 5 hours per week to 3 hours per week, on the grounds that the two hour period could be more effectively spent outside the classroom. It is not being suggested that the time for study be reduced but that the learning outcomes are better under alternative conditions. Like the advocates of voluntary evening school in England, they are advocating that a larger proportion of staff energy should be devoted to providing individual and small group help.

The idea is not new. Forty years ago Lloyd Trump was advocating large group, small group and individual instruction. But the idea has the support of those teachers and students who are finding the classroom a poor place for individual work. Ideas about individual progression keep bubbling only to be thwarted by the arithmetic of pupil/teacher ratios and evidence of rapid 'burn out' of teachers who attempt to negotiate a separate programme with each individual in their class. Hence the issue is a change in the dispersement of the human resources of the school to maximise individual help. Goodlad's sample of teachers thought a 40% drop in classroom time rather too much but were content with a 27% decrease. 'We found much of the 73% of time is given to control—15% or more'. (Goodlad, 1984, p.97) So be it. The excursions we had into this field at Marion always brought higher productivity which was sustained by students after the first flush of enthusiasm had passed. However, the idea was never popular with teachers because it meant changing their well-ingrained work patterns.

Goodlad observes that

> four elements of classroom life in the schools of our sample come through loud and clear from our data. First, the vehicle for teaching and learning is the total group. Second, the teacher is the strategic, pivotal figure in this group. Third, the norms governing the group derive primarily from what is required to maintain the teacher's strategic role. Fourth, the emotional tone is neither harsh and punitive or warm and joyful; it might be described most accurately as flat. (Goodlad, 1984, p.108)

> By finding more efficent ways to handle routines and by learning to manage the class with a minimum of time lost . . . teachers can increase . . . learning. (p.101)

So do a number of approaches—large group, small group—student interaction, varying focus from textbooks to films, to field trips, to library research—different approaches at one time for different students—clarity of expectations—rewards.

Power observes on evidence showing vast differences in the classroom time and homework (independent study) done by students, and their correlations with achievement, that 'the effects of an extra hour per week spent in learning are often substantiated, especially if that hour is spent on study at home'. (Power, 1980, p.107) Marion's model corroborates these claims when active modes of learning are followed. We obtained very significant increases in productivity and showed that, on average, 40 minutes of routine work in the well supervised classroom could be achieved (better!) in 10 - 15 minutes away from the classroom.

While it seems that parents and students on the whole, are passively content, students prefer the time given to activity, and greatest achievement follows these opportunities. Teachers do need 'to become self-conscious about the efficient use of students time in school'. (Goodlad, 1984, p.127)

Marion stumbled on a 30 minute recess break but it did create a time-space when the principal, teachers and students could converse and when teachers could prepare to use methods which require a little arranging but lead to better outcomes.

The evidence I collected around the world confirms the trend. To achieve better performances at established courses it is not more instruction time that is needed so much as better use of the time available. This is teacher-business, not always readily accepted, but essential. In wrestling with the early problems associated with levelling, we came upon the idea of using a common programme across the various levels at which a subject was taught. There are two important outcomes:

- The lower level student has to keep up—topics move past at the same rate—and learning increases.
- It smooths the way for students to move into classes which operate at a higher level.

Goodlad's reference to the amount of time teachers spend controlling their classes deserves further comment. In many of our schools, and especially in those which serve disadvantaged areas, the energy and time given to control often exceeds the levels that he observed. If these schools can be persuaded to adopt structures which encourage students to accept more responsibility for their learning, make help readily accessible, and adopt a culture which places the main responsibility upon attention to study, there is strong evidence from observations in other systems that student behaviour will be more mature, and that teachers can be released from the soul destroying control task. With more time available for directly assisting student learning, greater job satisfaction can match better achievements among the students. There are many references in this book to the alternative approaches which result in more learning.

As the range of senior students increases and especially as students return to school after a prolonged period away, or take up various options for which it is not useful to create embargoes through pre-requisite studies, the incidence of gaps in skill or prior knowledge, which can inhibit progress, must increase. Hence the pressure on teachers to follow the advice of mastery learning and ensure that a student can cope with one step before proceeding to the next, assumes greater importance.

A student's task is often made more difficult by teachers who do not always clarify their learning objectives, nor do they 'clear the stage' for new learning by identifying those elements of knowledge and skill which are needed before a student can move on to conquer a new challenge.

> When an instructional plan for learning is to be made, an initial step is to conduct a learning analysis of the particular learning outcome to be expected. (Gagné, 1985, p.259)

Gagné has generated a useful language which can be used to describe human capabilities and the verbs which can be used to elucidate them.

Capability	*Verb*
Intellectual skills	
Discrimination	discriminates
Concrete concept	identifies
Defined concept	classifies
Probe	demonstrates
Higher-order rule	generates
Cognitive strategy	originates
Information	states
Motor skill	executes
Attitude	chooses

(Gagné and Briggs, 1974, p.85)

Pragmatism also suggests a central position where students across a class are encouraged and taught to articulate their problems and where the school has created structures and services which enable students to bridge the gaps.

> It is not simply that we do not know which goals to pursue . . . The trouble lies deeper. For accelerating change has made absolute the methods by which we arrive at social goals. (Toffler, 1970, p.426)
>
> The moment is right for the formation . . . of a movement for total self-review. (p.432)

Such a movement will involve all educational levels of society and include all minorities. It will be responsive on a macro- as well as micro-scale. According to Toffler it will not be carried out by power conscious bemused bureaucrats reacting with knee-jerk rapidity to any suggestion or to the most way-out theory. It will be part of each institution's programme to seek to contribute through its own local initiatives. That will provide the room that individuals and groups need to adequately test the water and add a little heat.

I hope Marion was like that. I believe it was. It was certainly the intention. Of course everybody did not know what everybody else was doing. We tried to keep people informed, but most only listen when they find they are personally affected. As leader, you have to bear those bruises. You also have to bear the bruises inflicted when an idea goes wrong, or when you speak for the mass by blocking something contrary to consensus.

An alive and healthy school must always be bubbling with fresh activity. No period can be quite the same as a previous period. Marion High School has certainly met that criterion and there seems to be no reason to believe that its spirit of adventure will not continue.

It seems to me that we cannot wait until the swell of revisionism that pervades the public view of education has subsided. Unfortunately, during difficult times deep-rooted change has relatively few supporters, even when the evidence cries out for substitutes which are drastically different. That disturbing fact of life puts immense strain upon those who are prepared to grasp a very prickly nettle. It is my hope that the experience described in this book will lend encouragement to those who are willing to tackle the future with an open mind and with a commitment to a broader, all embracing approach to secondary education.

Toffler wanted to 'help create a consciousness needed for man to undertake control of changes, the guidance of its evolution. For by making imaginative use of change to channel change . . . we can reach out and humanise distant tomorrows'. (Toffler, 1973, p.440) We tried to do that at Marion. It is not for me to judge whether we succeeded. What evidence there is has been included in this text and in the examples placed between the chapters.

Rather than try to anticipate the future it may be more valuable to address it in terms of how well the school may be able to cope with the social brew around it now, or in the next five to ten years. In an education world often desperate for success stories but short on know-how and even shorter on clarity about the issues (the needs or wants or real aspirations), a careful review of the methods used by teachers could be the most fruitful source of growth.

Future Trends

What of the more revolutionary suggestions which have a bearing on the outcomes Marion has been seeking?

Studying at more than one institution has been suggested. Some Marion students have been doing that over several years, and some other students from other schools have come to Marion for a subject. It is one way of providing for a minority, and it helps the economics of teacher/pupil ratios.

The threat to divide the secondary school into senior and junior high schools is still present. The many examples around the world seem to have been simplistic bureaucratic solutions of systems or groups of schools to what is a numbers/economic problem. My evidence is that the move would achieve much less than is hoped because it breaks the continuity of pastoral support during the vital adolescent years and tends to perpetuate the worst aspects of academic elitism. The advocates of division too glibly take a mean figure for the age at which young adulthood emerges and set it as the fixed time to change schools. Toffler's plea for local humanistic solutions during this period of rapid change deserves to be given priority.

Alternative study patterns which depart from the subject/class structure have been advocated. Marion has not found it necessary to adopt an alternative organisation for most of the students, but the structure has been such that, when an individual's special personality, handicap or gift requires it, the school is able to create the chance for the student to study in unconventional ways.

Recently different forms of assessment have been suggested. Goal-based, sometimes called referenced or work-required, assessment, is receiving considerable promotion in some quarters. Assessment at Marion within its levels structure could be called goal-based: this trend will not be new to Marion. When the principles of levelling are recognised this approach has validity. Its danger lies in less able youngsters negotiating a watered down/low quality expectation. For a large group, time economics make the class a multi-level one with all the strengths and weaknesses of this arrangement.

Nor will criteria-based assessment be new, because it too, has been used whenever it was appropriate. Learning levels were based upon the criterion of intellectual performance level. It is also true that the practice of upward movement through levels is a step beyond the narrower definitions of goal-based learning which often fail to recognise growth in intellect. Success and challenge are being maintained as a constant tandem of relevance to whatever a student undertakes.

New technology is opening new possibilities. Small remote schools are leaders in opening up more subjects, through radio and telephone (and soon by television) hook up. Our imaginations may not be able to comprehend the future potential of these moves, but it does stimulate us to visualise some break down in tight subject/teacher limited syllabuses. The computer has shown us its potential already in areas found difficult, inefficient or extremely high time consumers of class time.

But maybe we should approach change as a readjustment of the equilibrium which must exist between the restraining forces and driving forces which set the best approach for the teacher. When a restraint is eased, it may change the classroom if the organisation is ready to make the adjustment. T.B. Greenfield

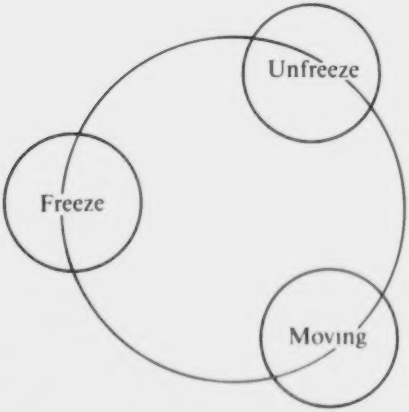
> sees organisations and individuals as inextricably intertwined [and] it may not be so easy to alter [them] or to lead them, or to administer them without touching something unexpectedly human. (Greenfield, 1976, pp.59 - 84)

If we accept that the organisation and the people in it are interlaced then we will be more ready to adjust teachers' work and the organisation together and in close sympathy with one another.

> Obviously, when one or another of these forces is removed or weakened, the equilibrium is upset and change occurs. On a very simple level, such an imbalance can be brought about by the introduction of a new work technique or the acquisition

> of new skills by participants. But an organization is essentially a stable entity generally characterized by equilibrium; an imbalance of equilibrium will bring about readjustments that will again lead to a new organizational equilibrium . . . (Owens, 1981, p.262)

Figure 42.



A three-step change as an ongoing life cycle of an organization

(Owens, 1981, p.262)

This kind of

> force-field analysis eventually led its creator, Kurt Lewin, to a fundamental three-step change strategy that has come into increasingly popular use. It is predicated on the notion that in order to effect organizational change, it is first necessary to break the equilibrium of the force field: that is, the organization must be *unfrozen*. Once that is done, it is possible to introduce *change*—to move the organization to a new level. But no one knows better than educational administrators how fragile change can be, and how easily the organization can slip back into its old ways. Therefore, the third step in the three-step change process is *re-freezing* . . . Unfreezing can be a highly traumatic experience to a very rigid and resisting organisation. But it can also be built in as a normal part of its life cycle. (Owens, 1981, p.260-1)

> What is needed for reconstruction of the schools is productive tension between an inner drive for renewal and ideas, services and encouragement from without . . .
> The single school is . . . the proper unit for educational change. (Goodlad, 1975a, and extended in Goodlad, 1975b)

It is my view that leaders will more than ever before have to engage in deliberate readjustment of their schools to new stable forms of operation which ensure self-actualisation of every student as a person with gifts and potential of worth. Thus future developments in schools will depend upon the competence and willingness of the leaders (the principal is the chief change agent in a school) to take change into the total complex of the school's philosophy, curriculum, and roles of its personnel. From this vantage point it will be necessary to revamp the organisational structures and administrative practices within which each teacher and student will operate. It will involve principals in the processes of re-education of their school communities and in re-development of many individuals on their staffs. This aspect of their work will occupy so important a place, that it will focus more of their energy than any other facet of their work.

It will continue to be a risky business for principals but walking the tightrope, holding that productive tension, will produce the vital educational environment which is necessary as we move into the future.

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A Risky Business is an absorbing account of a high school in crisis and how the dedicated and concerted efforts of the principal and staff met the challenge successfully.

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Detailed accounts of the processes involved and the research findings considered in decision making, allow readers to draw their own conclusions, thereby providing valuable insights for administrators, teachers, tertiary students, school councillors, parents and others into the vital educational issues presented.

Brian Hannaford, was offered a Visiting Fellowship at Flinders University to document his experiences in high school administration, and *A Risky Business* is the result.

Practical experience in the field as a high school principal for twenty-four years has meant that Mr Hannaford has been able to call upon a wealth of experience, which has been enhanced by visits to education establishments all over Australia and fifteen other countries.

In recognition of his services to education, the author is a Member of the Order of Australia and a Fellow of the Australian College of Education.